



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,  
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige  
Department of Children, Equality,  
Disability, Integration and Youth

# National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy II

2024-2028



Prepared by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

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# Children *Chavorre*

# Forward

## Roderic O’Gorman

*Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth*



As Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, I am delighted to present the *National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy II*, which was developed in close collaboration with representatives of the Traveller and Roma communities and with Government Departments and State Agencies.

The new Strategy and related Action Plan deliver on a commitment in the Programme for Government (2020) to review the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017–2021 (NTRIS) and to ensure that the successor Strategy has a stronger outcomes focused approach.

The previous NTRIS was launched in June 2017 by my predecessor as Chair of the NTRIS Steering Committee, David Stanton T.D., Minister of State at the then Department of Justice and Equality. I wish to pay tribute to Minister Stanton for further embedding the whole-of-Government approach in the NTRIS process, and for including the Traveller and Roma communities in the identification of priorities and in the oversight of Strategy implementation, all of which I have tried to develop further in the new Strategy.

It is important to acknowledge that progress has been made since 2017, particularly in education, the promotion of mediation and counselling services, and the participation of both communities in many aspects of policy development.

However, we must accept that there were deficiencies too, both in the design and implementation of NTRIS. There were too many actions, it was sometimes unclear who was responsible for the delivery of certain actions, and, in the absence of relevant data, there were difficulties in measuring progress.

**Most importantly, and as reported in the local consultation process on the new Strategy, many families and individuals in both communities did not feel any sense of improvement in their everyday lived experience.**



Unfortunately, it is still the case that Travellers and Roma continue to experience much higher rates of economic disadvantage and social exclusion than exists for other disadvantaged communities. Travellers and Roma are amongst the most marginalised groups in our society; they often experience discrimination, inequality and a lack of opportunities across many aspects of Irish life.

Much of this stems from the strong levels of prejudice and discrimination that Travellers and Roma have faced historically, whether in Ireland or across Europe. More worryingly, recent research commissioned by my Department confirms that attitudes towards Travellers and Roma within the wider population in Ireland are still significantly less positive than they are towards other diversity groups.

The NTRIS II seeks to tackle this reality head on. The Actions under the Strategy seek to challenge attitudes and to address the inequalities that face both communities:

**to tackle racism and discrimination in all their forms; to ensure public services are delivered in a culturally appropriate way; to enable Travellers and Roma to participate fully in all aspects of social, cultural and economic life; to improve access to accommodation;**

**to support health and wellbeing; to ensure progression through education; to build opportunities in training and employment; and to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty.**

In short, the vision set out in the Strategy is to build: **'A safe, fair and inclusive Ireland where Travellers and Roma are supported to lead inclusive, healthy and fulfilling lives.'**

The Strategy addresses the key issues and themes that were highlighted during the discussions with the Traveller and Roma organisations, and Departmental and State Agency stakeholders, through the NTRIS Steering Committee and also through a comprehensive consultation process held with both communities at local level.

In addressing these themes and issues, the Strategy acknowledges that much will be achieved through the delivery by Departments and State Agencies of other strategies and action plans that are relevant to the Traveller and Roma communities, such as the National Traveller Health Action Plan, 2022-2027, the National Action Plan Against Racism, and the upcoming Traveller and Roma Education Strategy. The approach is not to replicate these initiatives, but to acknowledge them under the different thematic headings. In this way, account can be taken of all actions being implemented on a whole-of-Government and cross-departmental basis.

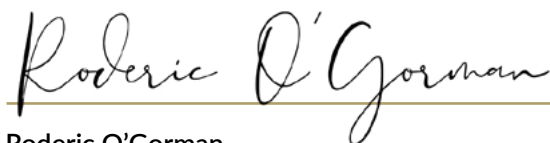
**It is important to highlight that this Strategy is directed to both Travellers and Roma, recognising that many of the issues to be addressed are common to both communities. However, the Strategy also allows for issues that are more relevant to one community than to the other, such as, for example, the language barrier that exists for many Roma.**

Implementation was a weakness in the last Strategy. I am satisfied that the NTRIS II has been developed to incorporate a stronger outcomes-focused approach and a transparent reporting and implementation structure, with achievable actions, clear performance indicators and a robust monitoring system. But full and effective implementation of this Strategy will only be achieved by Departments working together in partnership with Traveller and Roma organisations.

I am optimistic that, under the new Strategy, real progress is possible – particularly in the areas of employment and enterprise. I believe that positive labour market conditions at the present time provide a context in which to create the employment opportunities that would help to transform the highly negative employment outcomes currently experienced by Travellers and Roma. This would be transformational. The Strategy calls for the State as employer to lead in this regard.

Finally, I must acknowledge that there is more to be done. I sincerely hope that this Strategy can be a blueprint to continue this crucially important work to improve the lives of Travellers and Roma in the coming years.

I would like to thank everyone who responded so positively to the Traveller and Roma local consultations, particularly the community members themselves and those who spoke on behalf of the local organisations. The NTRIS II will be dynamic and transparent in its implementation, and I hope the individuals and organisations involved will regularly look in on progress and raise questions if they feel their concerns are not being met. They deserve nothing less.



**Roderic O'Gorman**

*Minister for Children, Equality,  
Disability, Integration and Youth*



# *Grat'i gradum*

## Culture

# Executive Summary

This is Ireland's third National Strategy for Travellers and Roma. It has been developed with particular reference to the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, under Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, and the Government's policy on the Values and Principles for Collaboration and Partnership Working with the Community and Voluntary Sector.

## **The Strategy aims to reflect the lived experiences of Travellers and Roma in Ireland and to recognise the many obstacles they face in their daily lives.**

The National Strategy for Traveller and Roma Inclusion in Ireland 2017-2021 sought to generate transformative impacts for Travellers and Roma in the long term, giving continuity and deepening the key areas for social inclusion: education, employment, housing and healthcare. While some progress has been made in a number of areas, there are still important challenges ahead to guarantee equity, equality and participation in both the public and the private spheres for Travellers and Roma in Ireland.

NTRIS II carries forward and expands upon previous efforts to include Travellers and Roma in Irish society. The focus of future delivery will be on equal access to education, employment, health and housing, effectively fighting racism and discrimination and promoting equal participation.

The consultations and analysis on this Strategy began in June 2022 and involved engagement with a wide range of stakeholders including: the Traveller and Roma communities, Government Departments, civil society groups and other statutory and non-statutory bodies.

While oversight of the NTRIS II will continue to reside with the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, the achievement of the strategic outcomes, strategic objectives and associated actions in this third Strategy are dependent on all statutory and non-statutory partners adopting an engaged and determined approach. The work of all Government Departments and civil society groups in delivering on actions outlined in previous national Strategies is fully acknowledged, and this Strategy seeks to build on the many actions and initiatives which have already begun.



**It is only through an inclusive approach across all sectors of society that the many problems faced by Travellers and Roma in Irish society, which are an expression of historical unequal power relations resulting in racism and discrimination, will be tackled.**

This Strategy will deliver an enhanced understanding of the root causes and impacts of racism and discrimination against Travellers and Roma in Irish society, ensure significant and ongoing reduction in the incidence of racism and discrimination and support operational and behavioural changes so that Ireland can become a place where Travellers and Roma receive inclusive, quality services and can participate fully in Irish life.

This Strategy is intended to link into wider shared priorities in the other national equality strategies, and the ambition to create a fairer Ireland. This means tackling poverty and inequalities. It also means ensuring that everyone has a safe and secure place to live, and ending homelessness. Above all, this Strategy is about protecting and promoting human rights, delivering equality and creating strong and cohesive communities. It recognises that working towards a diverse and inclusive society requires a multi-faceted, adaptable and ongoing approach with defined and measurable actions.

**There are five sections in the Strategy:**

**Section I** provides key background information on the situation faced by the Traveller and Roma communities in Ireland. It shows that Travellers and Roma continue to experience much higher rates of economic disadvantage and social exclusion than similarly disadvantaged communities.

## Travellers

### *Pavee / Mincéir*

Travellers continue to have poorer educational outcomes, although progress has been made to improve participation rates in second and third level education (at Junior Certificate, over 72% of the 2016 cohort sat the exam, up over 10% in five years; at Leaving Certificate, 31.4% of the 2016 cohort sat the exam, up almost 10% in six years).

Nonetheless, Travellers have high unemployment rates (61% in Census 2022). The key labour market barriers facing Travellers are: discrimination, both in hiring processes and within the workplace; low levels of education and literacy; and a lack of access to tailored public programmes and supports.

Travellers have historically faced strong levels of prejudice and discrimination. Recent research commissioned by the DCEDIY and carried out by IPSOS (2023) found that attitudes towards Travellers and Roma were still significantly less positive than they were towards other diversity groups.

A 2019 survey by the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) found that 24% of Travellers faced severe housing deprivation, which was 30 times more than for people generally in Ireland (0.8%). Other studies point to persistent issues in relation to securing culturally appropriate and quality accommodation for the Traveller and Roma communities.

As regards health, the All-Ireland Traveller Health Study (AITHS, 2010) reported that the overall Traveller mortality rate is 3.5 times higher than that of the general population, and that male and female Traveller life expectancy is at least 15 years and 11 years less than for settled Irish males and females, respectively. The infant mortality rate for Travellers is 3.5 times the rate of the general population. Many Travellers suffer from poor mental health; 11% of all Traveller deaths are caused by suicide, which is almost seven times higher than the rate for the general population.

## Roma

### *Romane Manusha*

The research report Roma in Ireland – A National Needs Assessment (2018) indicated that Roma continue to have lower rates of engagement with public services than similar population cohorts. The research reported that 20% of Roma received no social welfare support, including child benefit; no housing support, including homeless support; and no employment support, while 50% of respondents did not have access to health services. A major barrier that respondents identified was the inability to supply proof of habitual residence.

According to the 2018 National Roma Needs Assessment, 46% of Roma reported being homeless at some stage in their lives. The majority of Roma live in private rented accommodation, and 93% report facing discrimination when trying to rent a home, with landlords refusing to accept Roma as tenants. Cairde's 2022 National Roma Infoline Report highlighted that 77% of incoming calls were made from or on behalf of Roma who were homeless. This included Roma who were sleeping rough, living in emergency accommodation or in overcrowded private rented accommodation.



**Section II** outlines the vision for this Strategy, one that will be realised through respecting and promoting the diversity of identities and perspectives of all members of the community, improving the quality of life and wellbeing for Travellers and Roma, thus enabling them to participate fully in Ireland’s social, economic, cultural, and political life.

In short, the strategic vision is of:

**“A safe, fair and inclusive Ireland where Travellers and Roma are supported to lead inclusive, healthy and fulfilling lives.”**

The vision is underpinned by a set of core values, which are the guiding principles to be followed in the implementation of this Strategy. The core values are aligned with the 10 common basic principles of Traveller and Roma inclusion, as adopted by the European Commission,<sup>1</sup> and are drawn from the Government’s agreed set of values and principles for collaboration and partnership working with the community and voluntary sector.

**Section III** highlights how the Strategy was developed through the particular ‘lens’ of equality and human rights. It emphasises the importance of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty (the ‘Public Sector Duty’) and of addressing intersectionality. The Public Sector Duty provided a coherent framework for the development of the Strategy, comprising an assessment of the equality and human rights issues pertaining to Travellers and Roma under each of the nine themes in this Strategy, and devising an action plan to address the issues raised in the assessment.

The assessment was supported by a number of regional and local consultations carried out by Traveller and Roma organisations in September and October 2023. The results of the assessment and the consultations with Travellers and Roma are collated in the *Report on the outcome of the local consultation process with Traveller and Roma organisations, community groups and individuals to inform the development of the successor Strategy to the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy* prepared by Values Lab consultants.<sup>2</sup>

The intersectional approach complemented the Public Sector Duty and assisted in identifying, understanding and tackling structural inequality that accounts for the lived experience of Travellers and Roma with intersecting identities. It also provides a means whereby Departments and State Agencies can report on the delivery of actions under NTRIS II, as well as under other equality strategies, in a way that addresses intersectionality and meets the reporting requirement of the Public Sector Duty.

Section III also sets out the most relevant policy developments, initiatives and report recommendations that shape the approach adopted in the Strategy.

1 Constructive, pragmatic and non-discriminatory policies; Explicit but not exclusive targeting; Inter-cultural approach; Aiming for mainstream; Awareness of the gender dimension; Transfer of evidence-based policies; Use of European Union instruments; Involvement of regional and local authorities; Involvement of Central Statistics Office; Active participation of Traveller and Roma. European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, *The 10 common basic principles on Roma inclusion – Vademedecum*, Publications Office, 2010, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2767/22771>

2 Values Lab, 2023, [Report on the outcome of the local consultation process with Traveller and Roma organisations, community groups, and individuals to inform the development of the successor strategy to the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy](https://itmtrav.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Values-Labs-Final-Report-on-local-Traveller-organisations-NTRIS-II-Consultation-October-2023-1.pdf), <https://itmtrav.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Values-Labs-Final-Report-on-local-Traveller-organisations-NTRIS-II-Consultation-October-2023-1.pdf>

**Section II:** Government's agreed set of values and principles for collaboration and partnership working with the community and voluntary sector.

## Social Justice

Human rights, equality and anti-discrimination.

## Respect for Diversity

Respect and value the diversity of identities and perspectives of all members of the community.

## Empowering Communities

Active participation, social inclusion and sustainable development.

## Visibility

Increase the positive and non-stereotypical representation of Travellers and Roma in public life.

## Collaboration

Work in partnership across Government and with civil society.

## Accessibility

Acknowledge and remove barriers which may prevent Travellers and Roma from enjoying full equality.

## Accountability

Incorporate strong oversight mechanisms with clear accountability on the implementation of the Strategy.

## Cost Effectiveness

Coherence in service delivery, avoid duplication of efforts and conflicting objectives.

## Harmonisation

Consistent and coherent approach in the delivery of policies and programmes, that will help bring about the change that is needed.

## Subsidiarity

Support local participation and representation processes.



**Section IV** outlines how the Strategy will be implemented. The high-level objectives will be delivered through two 2-year action plans, which will outline Key Performance Indicators, responsibilities and timelines for implementation of actions. The first Action Plan is published alongside this Strategy. It sets out actions for the period 2024–2028 and indicative actions for the period 2027–2028.

The Strategy acknowledges that much will be achieved through the delivery by Departments and State Agencies of initiatives under other strategies and action plans that are relevant to the Traveller and Roma communities. Examples are the National Traveller Health Action Plan and the National Action Plan Against Racism.

The approach, therefore, is not to replicate these initiatives as separate actions under NTRIS II, but to provide detail on them under the different thematic headings. In this way, account can be taken of all actions being implemented on a whole-of-Government and cross-departmental basis.

The Strategy provides for improved oversight structures to ensure greater clarity and accountability for the delivery of key actions. It also incorporates a strong implementation structure, with achievable actions, clear Key Performance Indicators, measurable targets and a robust monitoring system.

A high level Steering Committee, chaired by the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, will be established comprising representatives from the Traveller and Roma communities, and statutory and non-statutory bodies. Its secretariat will be provided by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, and its function will be to ensure successful implementation of the Strategy. The Steering Committee will have a more strategic role than previously, and will have the scope to address any issues that arise in the delivery of actions encountered across any of the nine themes of the Strategy, either on a thematic basis or in terms of the work of a particular Department or State Agency. It will also address the issue of intersectionality.

There will be transparent quarterly public reporting on progress in delivering actions under NTRIS II across all Departments, State Agencies, and Traveller and Roma organisations charged with delivering such actions. This reporting will be supported by a published annual report on progress. The annual report will be presented to the Minister and to the Cabinet Committee on Social Affairs and Public Services. There will be provision for an annual forum at which the Traveller and Roma communities and their representatives will have the possibility to raise questions and to seek further information.

Implementation of the Strategy will be supported and coordinated at central Government level. Political oversight of this whole-of-Government Strategy will be provided by the Cabinet Committee on Social Affairs and Public Services.

**Section V** outlines the nine themes in the Strategy, which are closely aligned with those in the EU Roma Strategic Framework on Equality, Inclusion and Participation 2020-30. Each theme has its own strategic outcome and strategic objectives, which are outlined below:

### Theme 1: Combatting Racism and Discrimination

#### Strategic Outcome

The right of Travellers and Roma in Ireland to live their lives free of racism and discrimination is realised. A positive culture of respect for, and protection of, the cultural identity of Travellers and Roma is fostered and facilitated in the delivery of all public services.

#### Strategic Objectives

1. Through implementation of the National Action Plan Against Racism (NAPAR) and other initiatives, deliver a significant improvement to the mechanisms in place for combatting racism and discrimination faced by the Traveller and Roma communities.
2. Plan and deliver public services in a context of cultural competence, with due regard to Traveller and Roma cultural identity and taking account of the requirements of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty (the 'Public Sector Duty').
3. Strengthen knowledge of, and effective access to, the equality remedies that are available to the Traveller and Roma communities.
4. Address the extremely low levels of trust in, and satisfaction with, An Garda Síochána and the justice system generally on the part of Travellers and Roma, and the consequences that can flow from this in the absence of an alternative system of conflict resolution, including interfamily violence and feuding, both of which inflict very damaging consequences on the community.
5. Address the high levels of representation of Travellers in all levels of the penal system.



## Theme 2: Children and Young People

### Strategic Outcome

Traveller and Roma children and young people live in a society in which they feel safe, their potential is supported, their voices are heard, and equality of opportunity is promoted.

### Strategic Objectives:

1. Traveller and Roma children and young people participate in the development of policy, legislation, research and services which impact on them.
2. Children and young people from the Traveller and Roma communities live in a safe and secure environment.
3. Traveller and Roma children and young people have the opportunity to participate in youth work programmes and access youth services that meet their needs.

## Theme 3: Gender Equality

### Strategic Outcome

Traveller and Roma women and girls feel empowered and enjoy equal opportunities, rights and conditions in all spheres of life, both public and private.

### Strategic Objectives

1. Foster the participation of Traveller and Roma women in political and public life, including decision-making, and in leadership positions.
2. Address and combat gender-based violence against Traveller and Roma women and girls.
3. Promote and support Traveller and Roma women's and girls' access to education, employment and accommodation (*actions embedded in other themes*).

## Theme 4: Health and Wellbeing

### Strategic Outcome

Travellers and Roma experience the highest attainable standard of health, mental health and wellbeing.

### Strategic Objectives

1. Address the social determinants of Traveller and Roma health through a comprehensive public health response that provides tailored and affirmative measures to promote health and reduce inequalities, and that effectively implements the National Traveller Health Action Plan.
2. Improve Traveller and Roma mental health and wellbeing, and combat mental health-related stigma. Improve awareness of mental health difficulties and improve access to services.

## Theme 5: Employment and Enterprise

### Strategic Outcome

Travellers and Roma have equal access to quality and sustainable employment. Entrepreneurship and self-employment opportunities for Travellers and Roma are supported. There is a positive and inclusive workplace culture where diversity is valued and every individual is treated with respect and dignity.

### Strategic Objectives

1. Adopt a strategic approach to addressing Traveller and Roma unemployment in the context of prevailing strong labour market conditions.
2. Increase the number of Travellers and Roma in employment in the public sector.
3. Increase the number of Travellers and Roma in employment in the private sector.
4. Support self-employment, entrepreneurship and social enterprise opportunities.
5. Address barriers to accessing the labour market and entrepreneurship opportunities, with specific reference to financial exclusion.
6. Build a positive and inclusive workplace culture (*actions embedded in other themes*).



## Theme 6: Accommodation

### Strategic Outcome

Improve the quality and quantity of Traveller-specific accommodation and continue delivery under *Housing for All* with the overall objective that every citizen in the State should have access to good quality homes through a steady supply of housing in the right locations, with economic, social and environmental sustainability built into the system.

### Strategic Objectives

1. Adequate provision of Traveller-specific accommodation for Travellers and delivery of accommodation under *Housing for All*.
2. Address Traveller and Roma homelessness, and support access to accommodation services.

## Theme 7: Education

### Strategic Outcome

Ensure equity of access, opportunity and outcomes, as well as meaningful participation, across the continuum of education for all Travellers and Roma, including those with additional educational needs, in an inclusive system where they feel respected and supported to fulfil their potential, and where they, and their cultures and ethnic identities, are visible and valued.

### Strategic Objectives

1. Through implementation of the Traveller and Roma Education Strategy, Equal Start and other initiatives: meet the specific learning needs of Traveller and Roma children and young people more effectively; improve retention, progression and outcomes in education; and continue to build and strengthen the relationship between the education system and Traveller and Roma families and communities.
2. Combat and prevent racism and discrimination against Travellers and Roma within schools and the education system generally, and ensure there is a welcoming environment with a positive culture of respect for and protection of Traveller and Roma cultural identities.
3. Work to improve the supports, services and information provision available for Traveller and Roma students interested in accessing Higher Education, Further Education and Training and Apprenticeships, address the obstacles that exist, and increase participation rates.

## Theme 8: Culture, Heritage and Identity

### Strategic Outcome

An Ireland in which:

- Traveller and Roma culture, heritage and identities are valued and respected, in furtherance of the State recognition of Travellers as a distinct ethnic group and in compliance with Ireland's international commitments towards both Travellers and Roma;
- Travellers and Roma are supported to preserve and promote their cultural heritage, thereby facilitating inter-generational learning, cultural continuity and positive self-identity;
- the Traveller and Roma contribution to contemporary arts and culture is supported and valued; and,
- through learning about 'the other', and through recognition of mutual interdependence within the diversity of today's Irish society, there is much improved inter-community understanding between the Traveller and Roma communities and the wider population.

### Strategic Objectives

1. Ensure ongoing, sustainable and visible support for, and promotion of, Traveller and Roma culture, heritage and traditions, with a key focus on intergenerational initiatives, cultural continuity and combatting stereotyping and misinformation about Travellers and Roma in the wider community.
2. To assist the active participation of the Traveller and Roma communities in cultural, artistic, and sporting activity.

## Theme 9: Participation, Empowerment, Cooperation and Accountability

### Strategic Outcome

Promote participation by Travellers and Roma within electoral processes and through local community, regional and national structures. Strengthen the ability of both communities to influence the development of policy and the delivery of local services and to monitor the progress and impact of initiatives that address the issues that are relevant to them, including under this Strategy.

### Strategic Objectives

1. Ensure that Travellers are adequately represented at local level through structures that are appropriately supported and resourced, and can have their voice heard in the delivery of local services.
2. With specific focus on areas where significant Roma populations exist, support the development of a network of dedicated Roma-led organisations with competence to represent, and advocate on behalf of, local Roma communities.
3. Ensure that Travellers and Roma are adequately represented on the overseeing structures for the NTRIS II, providing them with the opportunity to monitor and interrogate processes of implementation of the strategy and related action plans and to seek modifications in delivery as they consider appropriate.



4. Deliver enhanced accountability and rigour in monitoring the implementation of NTRIS II, primarily through greater transparency in the reporting of progress, and ensure an adequate response to intersectional discrimination and inequality, reflecting the diversity that exists within the Traveller and Roma communities.
5. Increase the engagement of Travellers and Roma in the democratic process and their participation in national and local administration, particularly in the fields of equality and inclusion, research, etc.
6. Review systems of data collection and available research across all state-funded organisations, processes and systems relevant to the Traveller and Roma communities: (i) to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty (where it applies); (ii) to support the monitoring and evaluation of actions under NTRIS II and of services delivered to the Traveller and Roma communities; and for any gaps identified, propose ways to improve the quality of data collected, the variety of disaggregated data published, or new research, consistent with the upcoming National Equality Data Strategy.

# List of Abbreviations

<b>AGS</b>	An Garda Síochána
<b>AITHS</b>	All Ireland Traveller Health Study
<b>CPD</b>	Continuing Professional Development
<b>CSO</b>	Central Statistics Office
<b>DAFM</b>	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
<b>DCEDIY</b>	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
<b>DETE</b>	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
<b>DFA</b>	Department of Foreign Affairs
<b>DFHERIS</b>	Department of Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science
<b>DHLGH</b>	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
<b>DoE</b>	Department of Education
<b>DoH</b>	Department of Health
<b>DoJ</b>	Department of Justice
<b>DPENDR</b>	Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan and Reform
<b>DRCD</b>	Department of Rural and Community Development
<b>DSGBV</b>	Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
<b>DSP</b>	Department of Social Protection
<b>DTCAGSM</b>	Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media
<b>DTransport</b>	Department of Transport
<b>EDI</b>	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
<b>ESRI</b>	Economic and Social Research Institute
<b>FCNM</b>	Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
<b>FLAC</b>	Free Legal Advice Centres



<b>FRA</b>	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
<b>HSE</b>	Health Service Executive
<b>IBEC</b>	Irish Business and Employers Confederation
<b>ICESCR</b>	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
<b>IHREC</b>	Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission
<b>IPA</b>	Institute of Public Administration
<b>IPS</b>	Irish Prison Service
<b>ITAJ</b>	Irish Travellers Access to Justice
<b>KPI</b>	Key Performance Indicator
<b>LCDCs</b>	Local Community Development Committees
<b>NAPAR</b>	National Action Plan Against Racism
<b>NCCA</b>	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental Organisation
<b>NSAI</b>	National Standards Authority of Ireland
<b>NSWG</b>	National Strategy for Women and Girls
<b>NTHAP</b>	National Traveller Health Action Plan
<b>NTRIS</b>	National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy
<b>OCO</b>	Office of the Ombudsman for Children
<b>RNA</b>	Roma Needs Assessment
<b>PAS</b>	Public Appointments Service
<b>PSD</b>	Public Sector Duty
<b>WRC</b>	Workplace Relations Commission

# i. Travellers and Roma in Ireland



# Irish Travellers

Irish Travellers are an indigenous minority who have been part of Irish society for centuries. The Traveller Community has long shared culture, identity, history and traditions, and it is the sole group to have their ethnicity recognised domestically.

The Equal Status Act 2000 defines the term 'Traveller Community' as the community of people who are commonly called Travellers and who are identified (both by themselves and by others) as people with a shared history, culture and traditions including, historically, a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland (Equal Status Act 2000, Section 2 (1)).

**In March 2017, the State recognised Travellers as a distinct ethnic group within the Irish nation (*Houses of the Oireachtas, 2017*).**

The formal recognition of Irish Travellers' ethnicity was a significant and historic development for Travellers and for Ireland. The announcement was supported by all parties in the Oireachtas and the recognition of the uniqueness of Traveller identity provided a solid foundation from which to pursue real equality and participation for the Traveller community in Irish society.

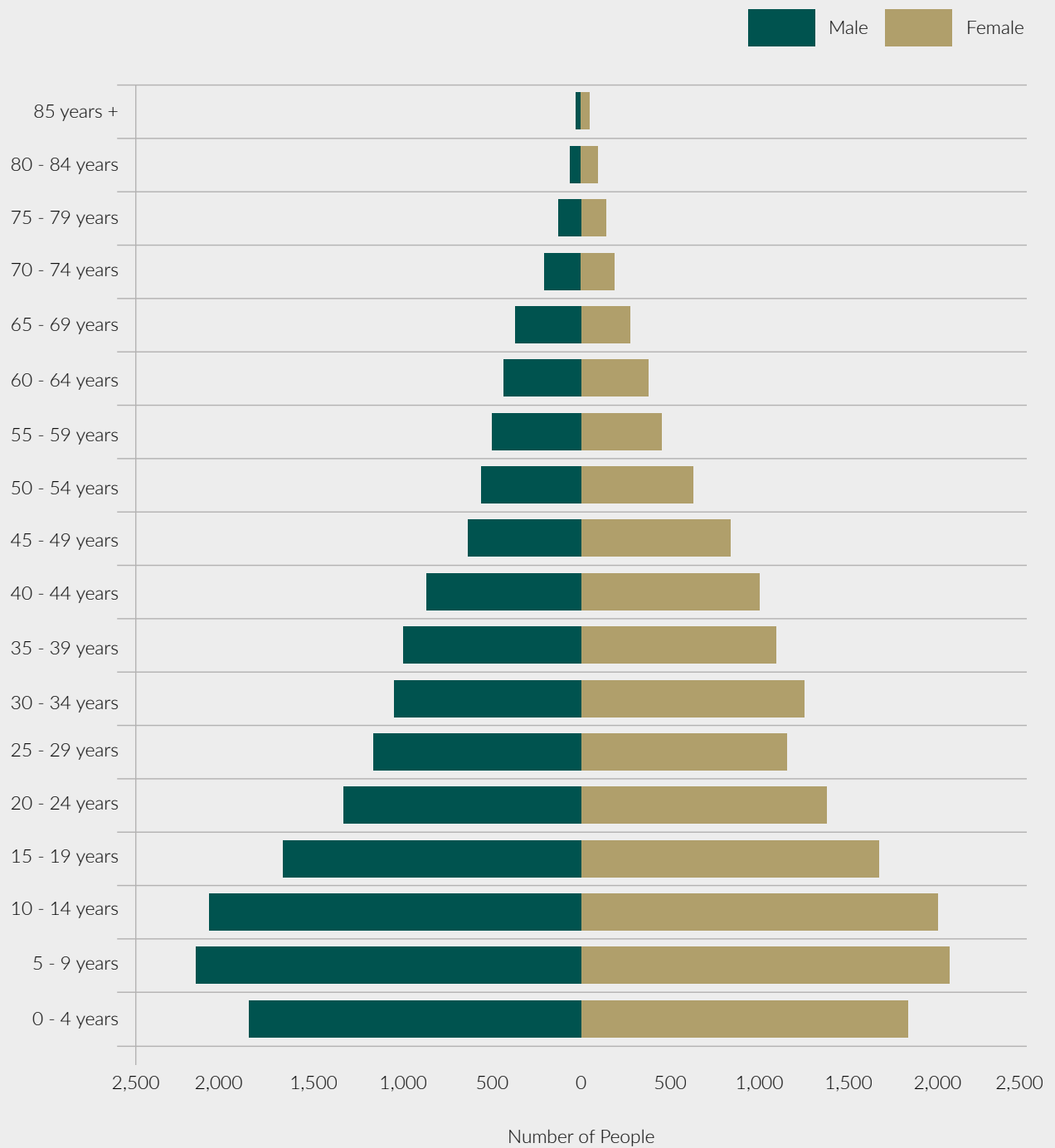
The recognition of Traveller ethnicity acted to counter stigma, increase Travellers feelings of self-esteem and inclusion, and to generate mutual recognition and respect between Travellers and the wider community; however, six years later, the Traveller community is still one of the most marginalised and discriminated groups in Ireland, facing extreme disadvantage and inequalities across a wide range of indicators, including in terms of health, education, employment and accommodation.

## Population Profile

The number of Irish Travellers living in the State and counted in Census 2022 was 32,949, an increase of 6% from 30,987 in the 2016 Census. Irish Travellers make up less than 1% of the population so, for comparison purposes, it can be helpful to use rates per 1,000 of the population. This shows that in Census 2022, six out of 1,000 people in the State were Irish Travellers. The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) also collects data on the number of Travellers living in Ireland. The 2022 annual estimate undertaken by the DHLGH reported that there were 12,186 Traveller families in Ireland. Given that the average Traveller family size is 4 (CSO Census 2022), this is equivalent to 48,732 Irish Travellers.

The undercount in the Census relative to other sources is likely to reflect a reluctance on the part of Travellers to identify themselves as part of a group that has historically been the subject of prejudice and discrimination, difficulties encountered filling out census forms because of literacy barriers, or in some cases not receiving forms in the first place.

The shape of the population pyramid for Irish Travellers (see Figure 1 below) reflects higher birth rates, a younger population, higher mortality rates at a younger age and a lower average life expectancy among the Traveller population than in the overall population. Similar population profiles can be found among other ethnic minorities, such as the Inuit in Canada or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia. According to the Census 2022 results, the average age of Irish Travellers was 27 years, compared with an average age of 39 for all people living in Ireland. Children under the age of 15 made up 36% of Irish Travellers, compared with 20% of the total population. At national level, 15% of the total population were aged 65 years and over, compared with just 5% of Irish Travellers.



**Figure 1:** Population pyramid for Travellers, based on Census 2022.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Source: CSO, Ireland. October 26, 2023. 11:00:00 UTC.

## Education and Literacy

Travellers have much poorer educational outcomes than the general population, with lower participation, retention and completion rates at all levels. While the number of Travellers with a third-level qualification is increasing – Census 2022 revealed that 312 Travellers obtained a third-level qualification, which was almost double the Census 2016 figure of 167, and more than triple the Census 2011 figure of 89 – educational attainment among Travellers continues to lag significantly behind that of the general population.

Looking at the group who stated their highest education level and are not currently in education, Census 2022 revealed that for 15.1% of Travellers, the highest level of education completed was upper secondary education. This compares to 27.5% of the general population (all ethnic or cultural backgrounds). A total of 4.7% of Travellers completed third level education, compared to 47.7% of the general population. Further, 6 in 10 male Travellers had no formal education or were educated to primary level at most. Of those in the group who stated the age at which they finished education, in 2022, 40.4% of Travellers had ceased full time education by the age of 16 or younger.

With regard to school completion, the available evidence suggests that the Traveller Community becomes increasingly disengaged from the education system as they get older.

According to Watson, Kenny, and McGinnity (ERSI, 2017), Traveller children and teenagers experience discrimination within the school environment, which may precipitate early school leaving. This finding is echoed in a survey conducted by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (2020), which notes that 27% of parents or guardians say their children are bullied in school because they are a Traveller. Across the six EU countries surveyed, 10% of Roma and Traveller parents said the hostile school environment or bullying was the main reason for their children dropping out of school before the age of 15, and it was the main reason why 5% of respondents aged 18-24 years did not continue school. 12% of Roma and Travellers felt discriminated against because of being Roma or Travellers when in contact with school authorities either as a parent/guardian or as a student.

The *All Ireland Traveller Health Study* (AITHS, 2010) pointed out there was a lack of motivation to continue in mainstream education as Travellers felt that it was not associated with positive outcomes because of the high level of discrimination faced when seeking employment. Education is one of the main social determinants of health and poor levels of education can negatively affect many other aspects of life. Addressing the educational needs of the Traveller community contributes to tackling the inequalities experienced by Travellers in society.



## Employment

A consequence of poor educational attainment is a high unemployment rate. According to Census 2022, the unemployment rate for Travellers aged 15-65 years was 61%, broken down between a female unemployment rate of 58% and a male unemployment rate of 63%.

The 2022 unemployment rate (61%) fell by 19 percentage points, down from 80% in 2016, and Census 2022 showed an increase in the number of Travellers in employment, with an 18% employment rate of Irish Travellers aged 15-64, compared to 11.9% in 2016 (and 9.3% in 2011).<sup>4</sup>

**While the increase in the number of Travellers in employment is welcome, levels of unemployment for the Traveller community remain extremely high compared to the unemployment rate of the overall population.**

Latest estimates indicate an overall unemployment rate of under 5% in Ireland, which is considered to be near full employment.<sup>5</sup>

Existing research has identified a number of key barriers facing Travellers in accessing and participating in the labour market: discrimination, both in hiring processes and within the workplace; low levels of education and literacy, and a lack of access to tailored public programmes and supports. In this regard, in the FRA survey, 38% of Irish Travellers interviewed reported experiencing discrimination while job-seeking in the six months prior to being surveyed. This figure rose to 70% within five years. These figures represented the largest percentage across all six countries in which the survey was carried out, for their respective time frames.<sup>6</sup>

An ESRI research report, *A Social Portrait of Travellers in Ireland* (Sartori, 2017), echoed these findings and highlighted the sharp increase in the chance of being in a job as level of education increases. The report also suggests that Travellers face additional barriers within the labour market; although not directly measured in the 2017 research, the ERSI acknowledged that prejudice and discrimination are likely to play a significant role in accounting for the gap between Traveller and non-Traveller employment rates.

<sup>4</sup> Calculations based on Census data. These figures are not official labour market statistics.

<sup>5</sup> Labour Force Survey Quarter 3 2023 (CSO)

<sup>6</sup> Roma and Travellers in Six Countries, FRA 2020.

## Social Exclusion, Poverty and Discrimination

Historically facing strong levels of prejudice and discrimination, Travellers have been identified as a group to be protected against discrimination under Irish equality legislation. The negative attitude towards Irish Travellers is well documented and recent research commissioned by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and carried out by IPSOS (2023) found that attitudes towards Travellers and Roma were still significantly less positive than they were towards other diversity groups.<sup>7</sup>

The poll found that just 53% of people would be comfortable living next door/in the nearest house to a Traveller. In contrast, 91% of people said they would be comfortable living next door/in the nearest house to a person from another EU country. The research also found that just 43% of people surveyed would be comfortable if their child was in a love relationship with a Traveller. The picture was slightly more positive in respect of schooling. Here 79% of participants said they would be comfortable with a Traveller child being in the same class as their child.

**The findings clearly demonstrate the need for initiatives to improve the attitude of people in Ireland towards Travellers.**

In its 2019 survey, the FRA (2020) found that in Ireland 10% of Travellers indicated that in the month before the survey someone in their household went to bed hungry at least once, and that 40% lived in households that had (great) difficulty in making ends meet. This means that their children often lived in households that were unable to afford basic expenditures, such as healthy food or heating. Some even went to bed hungry. This percentage is considerably higher than for people generally in Ireland (8%).

Poverty is also strongly associated with financial exclusion, and the FRA survey indicated that 63% of Irish Travellers did not have a bank account, compared to 6% of people in Ireland generally. Financial exclusion is defined as 'a process whereby people encounter difficulties accessing and/or using financial services and products in the mainstream market that are appropriate to their needs and enable them to lead a normal social life in the society in which they belong' (European Commission, 2008). This phenomenon is best understood as a consequence of social exclusion more generally, which in turn is one of many adverse consequences of underlying inequality and poverty and can serve to deepen existing marginalisation.

7 <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/bd151-survey-on-people-in-irelands-attitude-towards-diversity/>



Barriers to accessing banking services include the inability to satisfy institutions' customer identification requirements, and banking fees or costs. Exclusion from banking and related payment services can lead to a lack of security in holding or storing money, costly bill payment, inability to take advantage of lower prices of goods and services, and difficulties in taking up employment, finding accommodation and participating fully in economic and social life. In turn, lack of, or reduced credit access, leads to higher loan costs, lower disposable income, and exposure to less scrupulous lending sources, thereby resulting in adverse impacts on mental health and wellbeing (MABS, 2020).

The 2019 FRA survey found that Irish Travellers have one of the highest proportions of respondents amongst the six countries surveyed who felt discriminated against because of their Roma and Traveller background in the 12 months preceding the survey.

## **Overall, discrimination includes discrimination when looking for work, at work, education (self or as parent), health, housing and other public or private services (public administration, restaurant or bar, public transport, shop).**

There was little difference in the experience of discrimination as between men and women.

More Travellers (49%) were aware of at least one Irish equality body (Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission or Office of the Ombudsman) compared to Travellers or Roma in other countries. Similarly, in Ireland, awareness of laws against discrimination based on skin colour, ethnic origin or religion was among the highest (58%). Most survey respondents did not report or file a complaint about the discrimination they experienced. The proportion of Irish Traveller respondents who reported or filed a complaint (28%) was among the highest from all survey groups.

Among the groups surveyed by the FRA, Irish Travellers (52%) had the third highest rate of hate-motivated harassment (such as offensive comments on the street, or online) but were relatively less likely (7%) to be physically attacked. On ethnic profiling during police stops, 14% believed that the most recent stop was because they were a Traveller. This was the third highest rate compared to the other countries. Their trust in the police in Ireland was the second lowest compared to other countries. Trust in the legal system was also the second lowest of all six countries.

The *Irish Travellers Access to Justice* research report (ITAJ, 2022) pointed out the extremely low levels of trust in, and satisfaction, with An Garda Síochána (AGS), the courts and judiciary among Travellers, when compared to the general population. Research into how Travellers experience and perceive the criminal justice process found that respondents have: significant distrust in AGS (35% have no trust) and the courts (30% have no trust); strong perceptions of not being treated fairly by AGS (80%), judges (70%) and the courts (60%); high levels of perceived disrespect from AGS (90%) and judges (75%); strong perceptions of stricter treatment from AGS (89%) and judges (82%); and extreme dissatisfaction with AGS among victims of crimes (64%).<sup>8</sup>

## **The ITAJ shows that Travellers are simultaneously over-policed as suspects, under-policed as victims, and are overrepresented in the prison system.**

Irish Travellers comprise almost eight per cent of committals but represent less than 1% of the total population in Ireland. The findings from the ITAJ survey closely reflect and expand on the findings of the EU FRA survey (2020).

8 Irish Travellers Access to Justice, S. Joyce, O. O'Reilly, M. O'Brien, D. Joyce, J. Schweppe and A. Haynes, 2022.



# Havari

## Accommodation

## Accommodation

Irish Travellers tend to live in larger family units and are more likely to live in urban settings than the general Irish population. Census 2022 revealed that the average Traveller household size was 4 persons (down from 5.3 in 2016 Census), compared with an average size of 2.7 for the general population.

There were 29,900 Irish Travellers living in private households, according to Census 2022. The majority of Travellers were living in permanent housing while 2,286 were living in temporary housing units, such as caravans and mobile homes. The proportion of Irish Travellers living in private households including living in caravans, mobile homes or other temporary accommodation was 8% in 2022, down from 12% in 2016.

In its 2019 survey, the FRA found that 92% Irish Travellers felt that there were not enough places, especially Traveller-specific accommodation, for them to live. 73% of the FRA survey respondents indicated being discriminated against when trying to rent or buy houses in the last five years (second highest rate among the six countries surveyed). As previously noted, a survey on attitudes towards diversity and the equality grounds (IPSOS, 2023) found that only 53% of people say they would feel comfortable having Travellers or Roma as neighbours. According to the FRA, 24% of Travellers faced severe housing deprivation, compared to 3.5% for the population in Ireland generally (Eurostat, 2024). 'Severe housing deprivation' refers to people living in severely inadequate housing due to a lack of access to minimally adequate housing, and often means not being able to access a dwelling to rent, let alone buy.

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) echoed the FRA findings in their submission on Ireland's fourth periodic report to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (IHREC, 2024).<sup>9</sup> Persistent issues were highlighted in relation to securing the right to culturally appropriate and quality accommodation for Traveller and Roma communities:

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9 <https://www.ihrec.ie/app/uploads/2024/02/Ireland-and-the-International-Covenant-on-Economic-Social-and-Cultural-Rights-1.pdf>



**“Many Travellers have been on waiting lists for Traveller-specific accommodation for years, with some changing their accommodation preference away from halting site or group housing accommodation due to their belief that these culturally appropriate options will never become available. Although Local Authorities have drawn down the full Traveller accommodation budget in recent years, there is evidence that funding has been concentrated on refurbishments rather than addressing issues with supply.**

**The State’s pilot caravan loan scheme offers loans amounts which are often too low to purchase quality caravans or make repairs. Travellers, Roma and migrants are at a greater risk of living in overcrowded and poor quality living conditions, in violation of multiple ESC rights.”**

## Health and Wellbeing

Along with education and job opportunities, accommodation is one of the main social determinants of health. Following years of marginalisation and poor living conditions, the Traveller community continues to experience much poorer health outcomes than the general population.

The *All-Ireland Traveller Health Study* (AITHS, 2010) provided a clear picture of Travellers socio-demographics in Ireland and identified factors associated with reported discrimination and how this affected Travellers' experiences of accessing health services and the quality of health services provided, including mental health services. The findings of the AITHS are stark. The overall Traveller mortality rate is 3.5 times higher than that of the general population. Traveller men tend to die on average at least 15 years younger than their settled Irish male peers while Traveller women die approximately 11 years younger than their peers. The infant mortality rate for Travellers is 3.5 times the rate of the general population.

## Poor educational outcomes, discrimination and poverty have been identified as factors in poor mental health amongst Travellers (O'Shea, 2011).

The suicide rate in the Traveller community is alarmingly high: 11% of all Traveller deaths are caused by suicide, which is almost seven times higher than the rate that applies to the general population (Tanner and Doherty, 2021).

In Census 2022, 4% of the Traveller population reported their health as bad or very bad. This is twice as high as the proportion of the total population who reported their health as bad or very bad (2%). 15% of Travellers reported experiencing at least one long-lasting condition to a great extent, again nearly twice the rate that applies to the total population (8%).



Where this refers to the disproportionately high rate of disability among Travellers, it is worth noting that such rates of disability likely contribute, in the form of multiple or overlapping discriminations, to higher rates of unemployment and lower rates of educational attainment for this cohort:

- among people with disabilities, 34% of people aged 15 and over are at work, and this is 17% where that disability is experienced to a great extent;
- in terms of educational attainment, for those educated to primary school only, this is 10% of the general population, but 19% of disabled people and 28% where that disability is experienced to a great extent.

Data on smoking was collected for the first time in Census 2022 and figures showed that Irish Travellers were more likely to smoke than the general population: 16% of the Traveller population reported they were daily smokers, compared with 9% of the total population.

## **Looking at smoking by age shows that one in three Irish Travellers between the age of 25 and 54 were daily smokers, compared to one in eight for the total population.**

The *National Traveller Health Action Plan* (NTHAP, 2022), informed by the findings from the AITHS, addresses Traveller health inequalities and outcomes using a social determinant approach. Social determinants indicate that as well as healthcare services, wider issues can impact on health status, such as discrimination and inequality in services, poor accommodation and homelessness, unemployment, and poor educational attainment. As a result, addressing the social determinants of health and determining opportunities for better Traveller health requires not just the action of the Health Services, but the participation of key decision makers in the areas of accommodation, education, transport, health, employment and social policy.

# Roma in Ireland

Roma constitute the largest ethnic group in Europe, with the Roma population estimated to be between 10 to 12 million. The majority of Roma in Ireland are from Romania, where the Council of Europe estimates that approximately 1.8 million Roma are living, representing close to 9% of the total population of that country.<sup>10</sup> Although Roma share a common lineage and have a rich cultural and musical heritage, particular groups established roots in various countries and regions, and their migrations to many different countries over the centuries have produced numerous distinct communities.

*Roma in Ireland: A National Needs Assessment*<sup>11</sup> (2018) offers a comprehensive picture of the situation and experience of Roma in the Irish state. Roma researchers participated in all stages of this study, which is a quantitative and qualitative peer-led research with focus groups and interviews carried out with Roma across Ireland.

**Overall, this research shows that Roma in Ireland are a diverse group with a range of experiences and that there are now second and third generation Roma living in Ireland.**

All of the respondents (who were over 18) were born outside Ireland, with 14% living in Ireland for a period of 15 years or more. Almost two-thirds of Roma children in households had been born in Ireland and 52.2% of children were Irish citizens.

10 <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/access-to-justice-for-roma-women/romania> (see country profile tab)

11 <https://www.paveepoint.ie/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/RNA-PDF.pdf>



# *Kultura* Culture

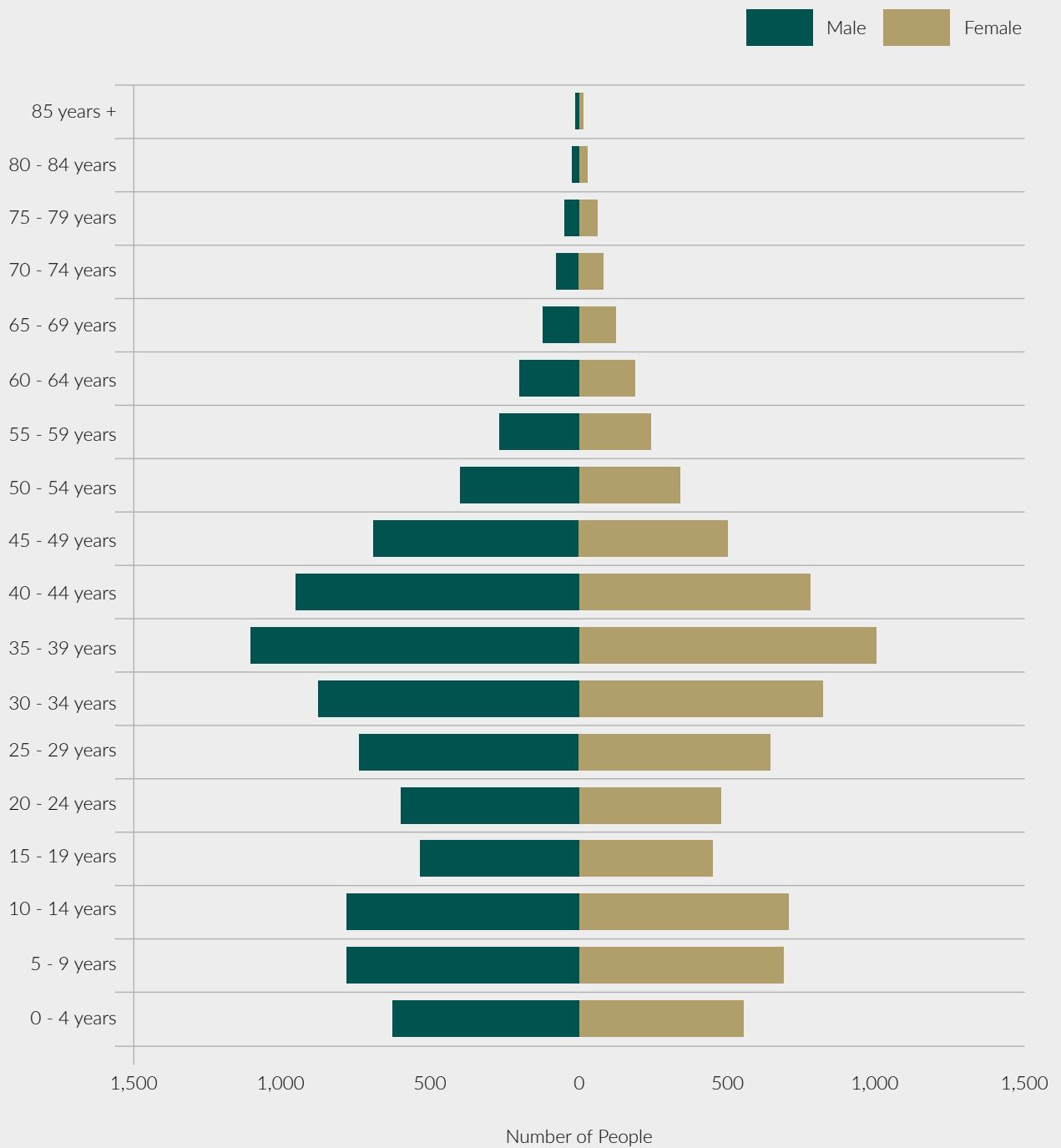
## Population Profile

One of the challenges acknowledged in the 2018 Roma Needs Assessment (RNA) was the complexity surrounding enumerating Roma in Ireland. This difficulty likely reflects the long history of persecution and discrimination experienced by Roma and the perceived associated risk with declaring their ethnic status.

**Roma ethnicity was included in the Irish Census for the first time in 2022. The population of Roma as enumerated by the 2022 Census is 16,059.**

The census 2022 figures indicated that the most common country of citizenship of the Roma population was Ireland (28%), followed by Romania (22%), Italy (10%) and Poland (9%). This contrasts with previous unofficial statistics, which estimated the number of Roma in Ireland to be in the region of 3,000 – 5,000. The mapping in the RNA identified Roma from Romania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland, with the majority from Romania (approx. 80%). More recently, Ireland has witnessed an increase in the number of Roma people from Ukraine.

The shape of the population pyramid for the Roma population (see Figure 2 below) reveals that over half the Roma population are either adults aged 30 to 44 years or children aged 5 to 14 years, and shows lower than average life expectancy. In Census 2022, Roma children and young people (0-24 years old) accounted for 39% of the Roma population, while children and young people within the 0-24 age bracket represented 32% of the total overall population.



**Figure 2:** Population pyramid for Roma, based on Census 2022.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Source: CSO, Ireland. October 26, 2023. 11:00:00 UTC.

## Education and Literacy

There is strong evidence that Roma families value education, but that precarious living conditions, poverty, early parenthood and marriage and other caring responsibilities represent significant barriers to regular school attendance, participation and completion.<sup>13</sup>

The RNA indicated that inadequate English language and literacy supports for children and parents were also negatively impacting school participation, as well as the parents' low educational attainment and experiences of discrimination and segregation in education.

The RNA reported low education levels in Roma households: 37.8% of adults in households had never been to school. This was particularly marked for women, with 41.1% of women having never been to school, while 22% of men had never been to school. The majority of adult respondents' experiences in education were from education systems outside of Ireland, and only 11.1% of respondents reported completing 12 or more years of education. Proficiency in English was a challenge for many Roma: 71% of respondents reported having difficulty reading English forms.

Only 18.4% of the respondents had attended education or training in Ireland. Those who had attended school saw this as a positive opportunity; however, they also spoke about having had to hide their identity to prevent, or protect themselves against, bullying and discrimination.

**Educational disadvantage is a key issue in the Roma community and relates to how Roma participate in the labour market. Access to education, training and employment are crucial to participating in society.**

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13 <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/socialinclusion/roma-health-strategy.pdf>



## Employment

The 2018 RNA outlined that 78.9% of the respondents reported feeling discriminated against in attempting to access employment and, for many, hiding their Roma identity felt like being the only option to secure and keep work.

At the time of the research, 83.3% of Roma were unemployed and 17.6% of Roma households reported begging as a source of income in order to survive. For the first time, Census 2022 separately identified Roma as an ethnicity. Based on the principal economic status question, an employment rate of 61% and an unemployment rate of 17% are indicated for members of the Roma community, which is substantially worse than the national rates – latest estimates indicate an unemployment rate of under 5% for the overall population in Ireland.

The *Roma in Ireland: Access to Fair and Decent Work* report (2023) explored Roma experiences of employment in Ireland and sought to identify how best to improve Roma access to, and experience of, work.

**The report indicates that the issues faced by Roma in accessing and succeeding in employment are multifaceted and interconnected, and as a result employment interventions must also be multidimensional.**

Interagency collaboration between State services, State Agencies and Roma and Roma community organisations are required to address employment challenges.

## Social Exclusion, Poverty and Discrimination

It is well documented that the Roma community has faced generations of racism and discrimination.<sup>14</sup> The Roma are widely recognised as among one of the most discriminated ethnic groups and the community continues to experience misunderstanding, intolerance, discrimination and racism across EU member states. Evidence suggests that poor engagement of Roma in Irish society is attributable to marginalisation, discrimination, poor access to health and social services, and lack of a political voice.<sup>15</sup>

Data on the situation and experience of the Roma community, in Ireland and across Europe, illustrate the reality of the Roma experience as a socially excluded community that have been pushed to the margins of society. The data indicates a significant equality gap between Roma and non-Roma across a wide range of indicators, including health, education, employment, and accommodation; significant levels of discrimination against Roma in regard to access to, and outcomes from, employment; and high levels of racism experienced by Roma when interacting with the wider community.

The 2018 Roma Needs Assessment report outlined that 20% of respondents had no social welfare support, including child benefit; no housing support, including homeless support; and no employment support.

## A major barrier that respondents identified was the inability to supply proof of habitual residence.

The Habitual Residence Condition (HRC) applies to any person applying for social assistance payments, regardless of their nationality. While a policy in Ireland, the HRC has conditions, which cannot be met by many Roma because of their precarious living conditions. The *Te Rodel Nevo Drom*, 'We are Looking for a New Way' report (TIRC, 2024) echoes findings from the 2018 RNA, emphasising that some people have difficulty proving where they lived and demonstrating a strong pattern of employment in the formal workforce.

14 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/roma-and-travellers/antigypsyism/-discrimination>

15 Villani J, Daly P, Fay R et al (2021) A community-health partnership response to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Travellers and Roma in Ireland. *Glob Health Promot.* <https://doi.org/10.1177/1757975921994075>



Difficulties producing the documentation needed to prove habitual residency were exacerbated when individuals were experiencing homelessness, living in overcrowded accommodation with no tenancy agreement, living with extended families, or did not have utility bills in their own names despite living in Ireland for several years. The HRC criteria must be met to qualify for a number of State social supports, including Child Benefit, Carer's Allowance, Disability Allowance or Jobseeker's Allowance, and not meeting this condition results in a situation where the most vulnerable can be excluded from services.

Both the RNA and the *Te Rodel Nevo Drom* report also revealed that accessing PPS numbers could be an issue for Roma.

## **Close to 1-in-5 RNA respondents reported that they did not have a PPS number, which is vital for accessing a wide range of services, including applying for a medical card and social protection.**

There was also a reluctance and fear for some Roma to engage with statutory agencies, due to experiences of discrimination, lack of trust in the State and fear of the State. While this reflected perceptions of discrimination rather than reported incidents of discrimination, the RNA noted that it impacted trust and engagement with service providers.

The RNA study highlighted the impact of the lack of employment and not being habitually resident throughout the research, and that both acted as a barrier to financial, housing and employment training supports, creating a vicious cycle where those in most need of employment supports could not access them.

## Accommodation

Across Europe, many Roma live in substandard accommodation and are at risk of forced eviction. Roma living in Ireland today are generally in semi-fixed/fixed accommodation, although the RNA reported a high rate of homelessness and overcrowded accommodation.

Homelessness, including hidden-homelessness, is a significant issue for Roma. According to the 2018 Roma Needs Assessment, nearly half of the Roma interviewed reported being homeless at some stage in their lives, and that the major issues in relation to access to accommodation were related to discrimination. The majority of Roma lived in private rented accommodation, and over 93% reported feeling discriminated against in accessing accommodation, with landlords refusing to accept Roma as tenants. When in accommodation, 66.3% of the respondents reported feeling discriminated against by a landlord or local authority.

As part of the RNA, focus group discussions revealed reports of Roma living in severely overcrowded conditions and in unsafe abandoned buildings. A quarter of Roma reported living in overcrowded households of 8 or more people and nearly half of the respondents (44.8%) said they did not have enough beds in their accommodation. There was a cohort of respondents living without basic facilities: 12.4% did not have a kitchen; 9.6% did not have a cooker; and 13.5% did not have a fridge. Close to 70% of the respondents said they could not afford to heat their home adequately.

More recent evidence from Cairde's *National Roma Infoline Report* highlighted that the Infoline had received over 8,000 calls in 2023 and that over 70% of incoming calls were made from or on behalf of Roma who were homeless. This included Roma who were sleeping rough, living in emergency accommodation or in overcrowded private rented accommodation.<sup>16</sup>

The above findings are echoed by the Report of the *Tipperary Roma Health and Accommodation Pilot Project*<sup>17</sup> (2024), which identified a situation of significant disadvantage for Roma across the range of social determinants of health, with access to adequate accommodation and security of tenure in that accommodation identified as the most urgent need for the majority of Roma.

16 <https://cairde.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/National-Roma-Infoline-2023-Digital.pdf>

17 <https://youthworktipperary.ie/roma-health-project/>



## Health and Wellbeing

The issues facing Roma in Ireland are multi-faceted and are often experienced across a number of areas. Experiences of poor health are linked to poverty, which can be linked to a lack of access to education and employment.

### **The RNA indicated that nearly half of respondents did not have access to medical cards and GP care.**

Maternal health emerged as a major concern and it was highlighted that 24% of Roma women had not accessed health services while pregnant, and their first point of access to services was to give birth. 37.1% of respondents reported that they did not have adequate supplies for the baby after birth, and service providers identified new born babies living in houses with no heat, food or basic supplies. Of the 6,643 calls received by the Cairde National Roma Infoline in 2022, more than half were made from or on behalf of Roma who had no medical card, and close to a quarter of incoming calls were made from or on behalf of Roma who had no PPS number.<sup>18</sup>

In relation to general health, the majority of the RNA respondents described their health as good, very good or excellent (55.1%), and almost one fifth of respondents described their health as poor. Diabetes emerged as a significant health issue, with 22.5% of respondents reporting that they have been medically diagnosed with diabetes.

In the RNA study, the majority of respondents (70%) reported discrimination in accessing health, with women significantly more likely than men to report such discrimination (53% versus 84%). The reported levels of poor mental health were extremely concerning, with over half of respondents reporting that they experienced frequent mental distress.

The *Te Rodel Nevo Drom* (2024) report noted that barriers faced by Roma in accessing health services included precarious living conditions, discrimination, the habitual residence condition, accessing PPS numbers, health literacy, and language, cultural and economic barriers.

18 <https://cairde.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/National-Roma-Infoline-2022-Report.pdf>

## ii. Vision and Values



This Strategy's vision for Travellers and Roma in Ireland will be achieved through respecting and promoting the diversity of identities and perspectives of all members of the community, and improving the quality of life and wellbeing for Travellers and Roma so as to enable them to participate fully in Ireland's social, economic, cultural, and political life.

This vision must also acknowledge the importance of a strong spirit of collaboration with partners across Government and civil society to deliver these outcomes. Traveller and Roma organisations will work collaboratively with Government Departments and State bodies to deliver on actions in the Strategy.

## Vision

With the above in mind, the Strategy's vision for Travellers and Roma in Ireland is:

**A safe, fair and inclusive Ireland where Travellers and Roma are supported to lead inclusive, healthy and fulfilling lives.**

## Values

The NTRIS II is underpinned by a set of core values that are the guiding principles for the Strategy. The core values are aligned with the 10 common basic principles of Traveller and Roma inclusion as adopted by the European Commission,<sup>19</sup> and are drawn from the set of values and principles for collaboration and partnership working with the community and voluntary sector, reflecting the Government commitment in *Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities: A five-year strategy to support the community and voluntary sector in Ireland 2019-2024*.<sup>20</sup>

19 Constructive, pragmatic and non-discriminatory policies; Explicit but not exclusive targeting; Inter-cultural approach; Aiming for mainstream; Awareness of the gender dimension; Transfer of evidence-based policies; Use of European Union instruments; Involvement of regional and local authorities; Involvement of Central Statistics Office; Active participation of Traveller and Roma. European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, The 10 common basic principles on Roma inclusion – Vademecum, Publications Office, 2010, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/7573706d-e7c4-4ece-ae59-2b361246a7b0/language-en>

20 Values and Principles for Collaboration and Partnership Working with the Community and Voluntary Sector, 2022, Department of Rural and Community Development. <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/d4445-values-and-principles-for-collaboration-and-partnership-working/>

# Values

## Social Justice

Human rights, equality and anti-discrimination.

## Respect for Diversity

Respect and value the diversity of identities and perspectives of all members of the community.

## Empowering Communities

Active participation, social inclusion and sustainable development.

## Visibility

Increase the positive and non-stereotypical representation of Travellers and Roma in public life.

## Collaboration

Work in partnership across Government and with civil society.

## Accessibility

Acknowledge and remove barriers which may prevent Travellers and Roma from enjoying full equality.

## Accountability

Incorporate strong oversight mechanisms with clear accountability on the implementation of the Strategy.

## Cost Effectiveness

Coherence in service delivery, avoid duplication of efforts and conflicting objectives.

## Harmonisation

Consistent and coherent approach in the delivery of policies and programmes, that will help bring about the change that is needed.

## Subsidiarity

Support local participation and representation processes.



# *Ghesti a dhills*

## Gender Equality

## iii. Developing the Strategy



The Programme for Government (2020) committed to carry out a review of the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017–2021 and to ensure that the successor strategy had a stronger outcomes focused approach.

This Section sets out the most relevant policy developments, initiatives and report recommendations that shape the approach adopted in the new Strategy. These are presented under the following headings:

- chronological overview of relevant policy developments since 2017;
- assessment of equality and human rights issues facing Travellers and Roma, in consultation with the Traveller and Roma communities;
- addressing intersectionality;
- the National Action Plan Against Racism;
- improving implementation: lessons from the review of the implementation of national equality strategies;
- the Joint Oireachtas Committee Report on Key Issues Affecting the Traveller Community;
- regulatory and oversight bodies' reports relevant to Travellers and Roma; and
- international policy developments and recommendations from review of Human Rights Treaties and Conventions.

## Chronological overview of relevant policy developments since 2017

The Government has sought to deliver the necessary and meaningful change for Traveller and Roma through a strategic process, the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy (NTRIS), published in 2017. Prior to the NTRIS, the National Traveller and Roma Integration Strategy (2011) was the main policy blueprint for Travellers and Roma in Ireland.

NTRIS 2017-2021 encompassed actions across ten themes. It was overseen by a Steering Committee, which was chaired by the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and included representatives of the Traveller and Roma communities and of Government Departments and Agencies, reflecting the process of collaboration between Government and civil society. While it is acknowledged there needs to be an ongoing focus on key areas to address the persistent inequalities of opportunity and outcomes faced by the Traveller and Roma communities, much was achieved over the lifetime of the NTRIS in the areas of education, employment, health, accommodation, culture and fighting discrimination and racism.

Relevant policy developments since 2017 are outlined below:

- **Recognition of Irish Travellers' ethnicity:** The formal recognition of Travellers as a distinct ethnic group by the Irish State in 2017 was a significant and hugely symbolic step towards valuing the unique culture, identity and heritage of Travellers and recognising their special place in Irish society.

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- **Roma in Ireland – A National Needs Assessment:** The 2018 National Roma Needs Assessment was completed and published by Pavee Point, in partnership with the Department of Justice and Equality, and included Roma researchers at all stages. This document is currently the key publication providing information on Roma in Ireland. The research relied on questionnaires, focus groups and interviews with Roma across Ireland, and is both quantitative and qualitative.

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- **Report of the Expert Group on Traveller Accommodation (2019):** This report sets out an integrated set of recommendations intended to improve the effectiveness of the arrangements for providing accommodation for members of the Traveller community, which were established by the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998. These recommendations address four key areas: delivery reflecting need; planning; capacity and resources; and governance.



- **Education:** Responding to specific actions in the NTRIS, the Pilot project Supporting Travellers and Roma in Education (STAR) was established and rolled out incrementally from September 2019 to target attendance, participation and school completion in specific Traveller and Roma communities regionally. The STAR receives funding from the Department of Education and DCEDIY and was extended a number of times, recognising the unprecedented impact of COVID-19 and the commitment to an independent evaluation of the pilot, which is currently underway.
- 
- **Programme for Government (2020):** The Programme for Government committed to carrying out a review of NTRIS and to ensure that the successor strategy had a stronger outcomes focused approach. It also made a number of other commitments that are relevant to Travellers and Roma. These are listed at Appendix 1.
- 
- The **National Traveller Health Action Plan 2022-2027 (NTHAP)** was launched in November 2022. The NTHAP acknowledges the health inequalities that Travellers experience and is working to address their specific health needs, using a social determinants approach. The NTHAP seeks to improve the health experiences and outcomes for Travellers.
- **National Equality Data Strategy:** The upcoming National Equality Data Strategy (expected 2024) will provide guidance on the collection of equality data and how to identify and address gaps in data systems, while drawing on relevant guidance provided by the EU. It will provide a framework for developing and implementing the ethnic identifier, which will enable Traveller and Roma access to, and participation in, public services to be tracked more accurately.
- 
- **Review of the Equality Acts:** The legislative basis for the prohibition of discrimination is through the Equality Acts. A review of the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015 and the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018, which prohibit discrimination across the nine equality grounds: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, and membership of the Traveller community, commenced in 2021. The Equal Status Acts also provide for an additional protection under the 'housing assistance ground'. The legislation prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination in the areas of employment and access to goods and services, including housing, healthcare and education. The review is examining the functioning of the Acts and their effectiveness in combatting discrimination and promoting equality.

A photograph of three people in a hallway. On the left, a man with a beard and a dark suit with a colorful striped tie. In the center, an older man with glasses and a dark suit with a patterned tie, pointing towards the right. On the right, a woman in a blue button-down shirt and patterned trousers. The background shows a wooden door and patterned wallpaper.

# Granēl

## Education



TRAVELLER E



FREE P



Missie  
Mollie  
Biddy  
Helen  
Nancy  
Sheila  
Twinie  
Bridgy  
Kathleen  
Maggie  
Sylvia  
Mary  
Bridgy  
Winnie  
Tracey

### **Assessment of equality and human rights issues facing Travellers and Roma, in consultation with the Traveller and Roma communities**

The NTRIS II has been developed through the equality lens. In taking this approach, the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, under Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, was of central relevance. The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty (the 'Public Sector Duty') places a statutory obligation on public bodies to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect the human rights for their employees, service users and policy beneficiaries, in implementing all of their functions. It puts equality and human rights in the mainstream of how public bodies execute their functions, including the development of policy.

More specifically, the duty requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other unlawful conduct against Travellers and Roma;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic; and,
- foster good relations between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic.

The Public Sector Duty provided a coherent framework for the development of the NTRIS II. This is because implementation of the Public Sector Duty requires public bodies to: undertake an assessment of the equality and human rights issues pertaining to their purpose and functions; to devise an action plan to address the issues raised in the assessment; and to report annually on progress and achievements with regard to identified actions. In the development of the NTRIS II, the assess, address, and report steps in the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission's guidance on implementation of the Public Sector Duty<sup>21</sup> were undertaken.

21 <https://www.ihrec.ie/our-work/public-sector-duty/>



An assessment of equality and human rights issues facing Travellers and Roma under each of the nine themes in this Strategy was conducted. The assessment was also informed by a review of the literature. A number of regional and local consultations were carried out by Traveller and Roma organisations in September and October 2023. The purpose of the local consultation process was to draw together and present the views of the Traveller and Roma communities at a local level in a manner that would contribute most effectively to the development, and processes of implementation, of the new strategy.

The results of the assessment and the consultations with Travellers and Roma are collated in the *Report on the outcome of the local consultation process with Traveller and Roma organisations, community groups and individuals to inform the development of the successor Strategy to the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy provided by Values Lab*.<sup>22</sup> The Strategy and Action Plan set out key strategic objectives and actions under each of the nine themes to be achieved over the lifetime of the Strategy to address the equality and human rights issues facing Travellers and Roma. Progress on the achievement of strategic objectives and actions will be reported on annually over the lifetime of the Strategy.

In drafting this Strategy, regard was had to consultations undertaken by DCEDIY with children and young people, which included children and young people from the Traveller and Roma communities. The consultations included:

- 
- the 'What WE Think' consultation with children and young people on children's rights in 2021;
- 
- the 'Report on the Consultations with Minority Ethnic Young People' was conducted as part of the development of the New Policy Framework for Children and Young People; and,
- 
- the Report on the Consultations with Young People to inform the Youth Homelessness Strategy Consultation (2022).
- 

<sup>22</sup> Values Lab, 2023, Report on the outcome of the local consultation process with Traveller and Roma organisations, community groups, and individuals to inform the development of the successor strategy to the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy. <https://itmtrav.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Values-Labs-Final-Report-on-local-Traveller-organisations-NTRIS-II-Consultation-October-2023-1.pdf>

## Addressing Intersectionality

To complement the Public Sector Duty perspective, an intersectional approach has been adopted in the development of this Strategy.

**Intersectionality is an analytical tool that is used for the purpose of equality and human rights monitoring to show the distinct forms of harm, abuse, discrimination and disadvantage experienced by people when multiple categories of social identity interact with each other.**

Intersectionality is often used by policymakers to refer to the interactions between the protected characteristics of the Equality Acts along with wider characteristics that shape lived experiences of discrimination, inequality and privilege, such as socio-economic disadvantage, occupation and care-experience. The broader usage to refer to all protected characteristics aligns with the requirement of the Public Sector Duty that public bodies have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity for those with protected characteristics.

For the purposes of this Strategy, the intersectional approach is best understood as a way of identifying, understanding and tackling structural inequality in a given context that accounts for the lived experience of Travellers and Roma with intersecting identities. For example, intersectionality helps us to understand how Travellers and Roma experience services, such as education and healthcare, differently as a result of their identity and unequal power dynamics. It is envisaged that the understanding of these differences will assist in making this a more effective strategy and one that tackles structural disadvantage experienced by Travellers and Roma.



## The National Action Plan Against Racism

The focus on intersectionality is a core principle underpinning the National Action Plan Against Racism (NAPAR),<sup>23</sup> Ireland's state-led, co-ordinated approach to eliminating racism in all its forms, including racism that impacts on Travellers and Roma. The plan applies to everyone in Ireland, and does not make reference to specific minority ethnic groups. Each action should be understood to encompass all individuals and groups experiencing racism. The NAPAR is part of Ireland's response to the UN's call for global action to eliminate racism and part of a wider effort to tackle racism and its impacts across the European Union.

An Independent Special Rapporteur on Racial Equality and Racism has been appointed, and will independently monitor and report on progress towards the objectives of the Plan.

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23 Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth, National Action Plan Against Racism (March, 2023)

### Improving Implementation: lessons from the review of the implementation of national equality strategies

In 2022, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth commissioned the Centre for Effective Services (CES) to conduct an independent evaluation of the processes used by the Government to implement three national equality strategies: the Migrant Integration Strategy, the National Strategy for Women and Girls, and the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy. The key findings from the CES Evaluation report, *Realising the Promise of Equality Policy*,<sup>24</sup> have informed the development of NTRIS II, particularly in relation to implementation and monitoring.

### The Joint Oireachtas Committee Report on Key Issues Affecting the Traveller Community

The Joint Oireachtas Committee Report on Key Issues Affecting the Traveller Community (November 2021)<sup>25</sup> examines the inequalities of opportunity and outcome faced by the Traveller Community in the areas of health, education, employment and accommodation, and recommends policy directions to mitigate the effects on the Traveller Community.

The Committee met with a large number of stakeholders including Ministers and Government Department officials, State Agencies, NGOs and advocacy groups, and with representatives of Traveller organisations, both national and local. The report makes recommendations in the areas of accommodation, health, education and employment, and emphasises that these issues will not be solved in isolation, and must be tackled through a whole-of-Government and a whole-of-society approach, and the engagement and collaboration of the Traveller community.

The Joint Oireachtas Committee was reconstituted recently and has been meeting since mid-2023 to consider progress in relation to the areas examined in its 2021 report.

24 <https://assets.gov.ie/263524/3cbdb171-bd53-4bec-b1e2-8ed6f962d6b1.pdf>

25 [Key Issues Affecting the Traveller community: Final Report of the Joint Committee on key Issues Affecting the Traveller Community](#)

PAVEE POINT

# Mental Health Initiative



# *Lyart an muni tapa* Health and Wellbeing

## Regulatory and oversight bodies' reports relevant to Travellers and Roma

Regulatory and independent bodies have investigated and reported on a number of issues impacting on Travellers and Roma across a number of sectors. Some key reports and issues are highlighted below.

### **Ombudsman for Children (OCO)**

*No End in Site – An investigation into the living conditions of children living on a local authority site*<sup>26</sup> investigated a range of issues impacting on Travellers on a local authority site, including persistent problems with rodent infestation; inadequate sanitation; extreme overcrowding; safety concerns about access to the site; illegal dumping nearby; inconsistent and inadequate waste disposal; inadequate heating systems; unsafe electrical works; a high rate of childhood illness caused by living conditions; a lack of safe play areas for children and housing applications not being progressed, leading to stress, tension and, at times, conflict.

A number of recommendations were made and the OCO has indicated that they are satisfied with the progress made by the local authority on each of the recommendations.

The OCO highlighted concerns in 2019 regarding the use of reduced timetables to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Skills.<sup>27</sup> The OCO reported that, 'At the moment the use of reduced timetables is invisible. There are no guidelines on its use, no guidance on recording its use and no external monitoring. Therefore there is no oversight of its use in individual schools.' Anecdotal evidence indicated that reduced timetables were disproportionately affecting particular cohorts of children who are especially vulnerable. This included children with disabilities, children with emotional and behavioural difficulties or children from a different cultural background, such as the Traveller or Roma communities.

In September 2021, the Department of Education published guidelines for schools on the use of reduced school days. These guidelines came into effect from 1 January 2022. The purpose of the guidelines is to provide clarity to school authorities and parents/guardians on the use of reduced school days and to ensure that this practice is limited to circumstances where it is deemed absolutely necessary.

26 <https://www.oco.ie/app/uploads/2021/05/No-End-in-Site-FINAL-.pdf>

27 <https://www.oco.ie/news/ombudsman-for-children-expresses-concern-at-inappropriate-use-of-reduced-timetables-in-schools/>



### **Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC)**

The role of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) is to promote and protect human rights and equality in Ireland, and build a culture of respect for human rights, equality and intercultural understanding in the State. The Commission's founding legislation provides a range of ways to address human rights and equality issues from engagement to enforcement. IHREC has highlighted a number of issues pertaining to the Traveller and Roma communities. These include: the continued lack of appropriate accommodation for Travellers; the extremely poor living conditions that both Traveller and Roma groups suffer; and the significant challenges they face in accessing justice, including Civil Legal Aid.

IHREC has also raised concerns that while the full Traveller accommodation budget is now being utilised by local authorities, it is often spent on refurbishment rather than building new units, and as a consequence the demand for accommodation is not being met. IHREC has consistently highlighted that Roma families continue to live in overcrowded conditions, sometimes without access to electricity, running water or sanitation.

To address persistent issues in securing the right to culturally appropriate and quality accommodation for structurally vulnerable groups, IHREC (2024) has recommended:

**'increasing Local Authority housing stock account for the cultural preferences of structurally vulnerable groups, and including high quality permanent and transient halting site accommodation, group housing schemes, and public and social housing, which can cater to the needs of larger families.'** <sup>28</sup>

28 IHREC, [Ireland and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights \(cloud.gov.ie\)](https://cloud.gov.ie)

Traveller and Roma groups are significantly over represented in the homeless population and there is a lack of safeguards governing evictions. In addition, the provisions of the Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act 1994 governing trespass, indirectly discriminates against Travellers by criminalising an intrinsic way of life of this group. Furthermore, the fact that the Civil Legal Aid Act 1995 does not apply to eviction proceedings can have a disproportionate effect on Travellers, especially as evictions can occur as soon as 24 hours after notice is served. To compound this problem, legal aid is not available for claims made in the Workplace Commission, a key avenue through which Travellers and Roma invoke their rights under equality legislation.

Noting the significant access to justice issues that Travellers and Roma face, IHREC has recommended that the State broaden its rules of legal standing to allow representatives of trade unions and NGOs to take actions on behalf of named complainants, as well as in the organisation's own name. A broad prohibition on discrimination on the grounds of criminal conviction has also been recommended by IHREC.

### **Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR)**

The Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) was established in April 2019 on foot of recommendations made by the Tribunal of Inquiry into Certain Planning Matters and Payments (the 'Mahon Tribunal'). The role of the OPR is to ensure that local authorities and An Bord Pleanála support and implement Government planning policy. The OPR also implements planning research, training and public awareness in order to promote the public's engagement in the planning process and to enhance knowledge and public information about planning in Ireland.

The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, states that local development plans must include objectives for 'the provision of accommodation for Travellers, and the use of particular areas for that purpose.' Local authority development plans play a crucial role in the process of identifying and facilitating the delivery of Traveller accommodation. As part of the OPR's role in assessing local development plans for their adherence to national and regional planning guidelines, it can make recommendations and observations to local authorities if it is of the view that they have not fully fulfilled their obligations in relation to Traveller accommodation.



## **International policy developments and human rights body recommendations**

The NTRIS II is underpinned by international human rights instruments, most notably the European Commission's EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation for 2020–2030 and the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, although others are relevant. A full list of relevant human rights instruments is set out at Appendix 3.

### ***European Commission's EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation for 2020–2030***

The European Commission's EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation for 2020–2030 ('EU Roma Strategic Framework') was communicated to Member States in October 2020. This 10-year plan builds upon the previous EU Framework for National Roma Integration strategies up to 2020 ('EU Framework up to 2020') and places the focus on promoting socio-economic inclusion in the fields of education, employment, housing and health, as well as on equality and participation. The Irish Government fully endorses the EU Roma Strategic Framework, which highlights both horizontal cross cutting issues and key sectoral issues to be addressed (See Appendix 2).

### ***Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities***

The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) is a legally binding multilateral treaty of the Council of Europe devoted to the protection of national minorities, which Ireland signed on 1 February 1995 and ratified on 7 May 1999. Under the FCNM, Ireland submits periodic reports describing the measures implemented over the previous five years, with reference to the Council of Europe's recommendations.

## **Ireland has completed four reporting cycles under the Convention, with the fifth currently in progress.**

The fifth periodic report, like previous State reports, substantially covers matters pertaining to the Traveller and Roma communities, while also commenting on a wider range of issues in respect of the diverse population of Ireland. The Advisory Committee under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities undertook a State visit to Ireland in September 2023. Recommendations following this visit are expected to be published in Quarter 3, 2024.

### **United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Concluding Observations on the Fourth Periodic Report of Ireland**

In its Concluding Observations on the fourth periodic report of Ireland on the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (March, 2024),<sup>29</sup> the UN Human Rights Committee recommended that Ireland:

- Ensure a whole-of-government response to effectively implementing the National Traveller Health Action Plan, ensuring an adequate allocation of financial, human and technical resources and the oversight of social stakeholders (Recommendation 45(d));
- Intensify its efforts to ensure that mental health care is available, accessible and provided in a timely fashion and guarantee the quality of professional mental health-care services, including community based services, in particular for disadvantaged and marginalised groups and individuals (Recommendation 49).

### **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**

The United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a major international human rights treaty that sets out the specific rights of children. The UNCRC has four key principles:

- all the rights guaranteed by the Convention must be available to all children without discrimination of any kind (Article 2);
- the best interests of the child must be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children (Article 3);
- every child has the right to life, survival and development (Article 6); and,
- the child's views must be considered and taken into account in all matters affecting him or her (Article 12).

<sup>29</sup> [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=2613&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=2613&Lang=en)



## The articles of the UNCRC are wide-ranging and cover a number of areas including health, housing, social security, education, leisure and play, child protection and welfare, criminal justice, and international protection, as well as access to information and participation in decision-making.

In its Concluding Observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Ireland (February 2023),<sup>30</sup> the UN Committee recommended that Ireland:

- Set a clear timeline for the next national Traveller and Roma inclusion Strategy and strengthen measures to ensure the enjoyment of Traveller and Roma children of all rights under the Convention, including with regard to full and equal access to education, health services and adequate housing and freedom from discrimination and violence (Recommendation 42(a)).

### *UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities*

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) is an international human rights treaty, which exists to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all disabled persons. The UNCRPD contains 50 Articles. In addition to provisions around definitions, principles and processes, the Convention contains 26 Articles covering all areas of life, from Health, Education and Employment to Equal Recognition before the Law, Freedom from Exploitation, Violence and Abuse, and Accessibility. The Convention also offers intersectional perspectives, in respect of women with disabilities and children with disabilities.

The Irish Government signed the Convention in 2007, and ratified it in March 2018. The Convention is monitored by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for which annual Conferences of States Parties to the CRPD have set guidelines since 2008.

<sup>30</sup> <https://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkG1d%2FPPrICAqhKb7yhsvOufvUWRUJILHlHKpXZxBJO6ukR67VoC4Y8jg%2BGkzfnf8DjzrqcpQTkSk6R3SYU8fyjSS%2FcV9rb5HcSS8FEaMfiWutY8PRQZpDhZZQiAjc>

### **NTRIS Steering Committee and consultations with Government Departments**

A number of consultations were undertaken with a wide range of stakeholders to inform the development of the NTRIS II.

- 
- In September 2022, the NTRIS Steering Committee engaged in a high level reflection exercise on the NTRIS. A questionnaire was sent to all members of the Steering Committee and the information submitted was analysed and a high level summary report (2022) was prepared.

- 
- The Institute of Public Administration moderated a further consultation with the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Steering Committee in March 2023. A facilitated discussion took place around key topics, such as the Strategy's oversight, implementation process, performance indicators, and a summary report was produced by DCEDIY.

- 
- DCEDIY led on consultations with Government Departments and State Agencies. Bilateral engagements with Government Departments helped to inform the policy direction in key thematic areas.
- 

### **Consideration of Strategy by NTRIS Steering Committee, and submission to Minister and the Government**

The draft NTRIS II Strategy and Action Plan were submitted to the NTRIS Steering Committee for consideration. Feedback received was considered and amendments were made. The draft Strategy and Action Plan were submitted to the Minister and, subsequently, to the Cabinet Committee on Social Affairs and Public Services.

The NTRIS II Strategy and Action Plan were approved by the Government in July 2024.



# *Olsk an dils*

## Heritage and Identity

# **iv. Implementing the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy II 2024-2028**



## Introduction and Background

The National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2024–2028 (NTRIS II) defines the direction and priorities for Travellers and Roma over the coming years. The Strategy is designed to create an Ireland in which Travellers and Roma:

- have safe and culturally appropriate places to live and travel;
- understand their rights and have positive experiences of accessing services;
- have support to maximise incomes, increase employment opportunities, and improve the standard of living;
- feel safe, respected and valued members of Ireland’s diverse population; and,
- are listened to, and have a say in decisions that affect their lives.

## Governance: Implementation, Monitoring and Review

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) will have overall responsibility for the oversight of this Strategy. Ensuring that this Strategy is implemented effectively requires its approach to be informed by evidence and that there is a strong monitoring and reporting framework to identify and address any slippage in delivery.

The NTRIS II is supported by a commitment to transparency, accountability and working together towards a shared vision. To deliver on this, a new structure is put forward in the Strategy that uses various approaches to engage all stakeholders, simplify decision making and to ensure effective strategy implementation.

## Reporting

Each Department and organisation will be required to give quarterly updates on implementation of actions under the Action Plan and to make them available online to ensure openness and transparency. The ready availability and access to updates will serve as a simple snap-shot of progress on Key Performance Indicators, allowing all stakeholders to track progress, identify issues and celebrate successes. Most importantly, members of the Traveller and Roma communities and the organisations that represent them will be able to review progress and to raise questions as appropriate.

An annual report on the implementation of the NTRIS II will be published to provide the wider audience with a progress update on the Strategy. A formal mid-term review of the Strategy will be undertaken in 2026 and will inform the development of new actions before the Strategy concludes in 2028.

## Reporting, the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

All Departments and public bodies covered by the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty (the 'Public Sector Duty') are required to assess, address, and report on the equality and human rights issues relevant to their purpose and functions. It is considered that participation in actions under NTRIS II, and reporting publicly on the implementation of same, will enable Departments and public bodies to show in a public and transparent way their compliance with the core requirements of the Public Sector Duty, as far as the Traveller and Roma communities are concerned.

Furthermore, to the extent that Departments and public bodies engage in, and report on, actions under Government equality strategies and action plans that are relevant to the other protected equality characteristics (for example gender, disability, sexual orientation, race), they should do so in a consistent and cohesive fashion. In addition, they should align with the requirements of the Public Sector Duty. This will deliver, in a tangible and meaningful way, an intersectional perspective to the realisation of actions to support equality and human rights at the individual organisational level.

## National Traveller and Roma Strategy Steering Committee and Sub-Committees

A new National Traveller and Roma Strategy Steering Committee will be established within 3 months of the publication of the Strategy. The Steering Committee will have fewer members than at present and will comprise representatives of relevant Government Departments, State Agencies, and Traveller and Roma organisations. It will be chaired at Ministerial level in DCEDIY and will meet on a quarterly basis, or more often as required. Clear Terms of Reference will be drawn up for the new NTRIS II Steering Committee.

The focus of the Steering Committee will be more strategic and it will discuss critical issues. The Steering Committee will oversee the implementation of the Strategy and associated action plans. It will also assess whether further action is required on specific issues or if revised actions are required taking account of changing circumstances and emerging opportunities during the lifetime of the Strategy. It will have scope to call for discussion at a future Steering Committee meeting any issues in the delivery of actions encountered across any of the nine themes of the Strategy, either on a thematic basis or in terms of the work of a particular Department or State Agency.

There will be a number of sub-committees, with clear Terms of Reference, aligned with the Steering Committee. The sub-committees will focus on specific areas, which may include, education, culture, research, employment, accommodation; their work will inform the main Steering Committee's decision making. To ensure effective co-ordination, the sub-committees will meet quarterly in line with the main Steering Committee meetings.



### Engagement with Oireachtas and Cabinet Committees and Senior Officials Groups

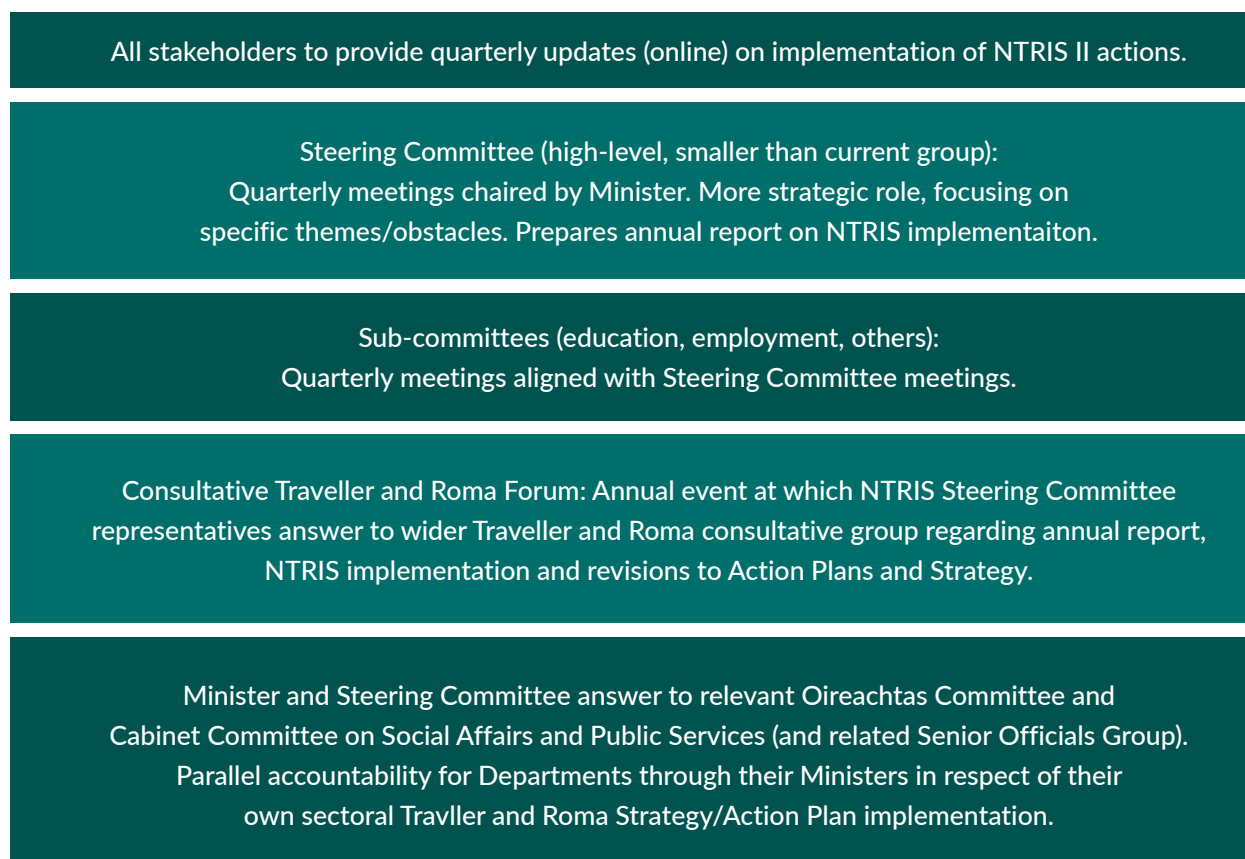
The Minister and the Steering Committee will actively communicate with the Oireachtas Committee on Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, and with the Cabinet Committee on Social Affairs and Public Services (and its related Senior Officials Groups), to ensure accountability at senior level. There will be a parallel accountability structure for individual Departments through their Ministers regarding their own sectoral Traveller and Roma strategy/action plan implementation. This will ensure a co-ordinated approach across Government, reinforcing the commitment to effective and transparent strategy implementation.

### National Consultative Traveller and Roma Forum

An annual Traveller and Roma consultative forum will be created, providing an opportunity to the wider committee members to ask the Steering Committee questions, raise concerns and find out more about the implementation of the NTRIS. It will also allow committee members to provide feedback directly to the Steering Committee.

These new reporting structures ensure the NTRIS II remains agile and responsive to the changing needs of Traveller and Roma communities in the State. Figure 3 summarises the NTRIS II reporting structure.

**Figure 3:** NTRIS II reporting structure



## **v. Strategic Themes, Outcomes and Objectives**



This Strategy contains a number of themes, which reflect the outcome of the review of the NTRIS 2017–2021 and the consultation processes detailed in Section III. It is considered that they align closely with the themes of the EU Roma Strategic Framework 2020-30.

The themes are:

**Theme 1: Combatting Racism and Discrimination**

**Theme 2: Children and Young People**

**Theme 3: Gender Equality**

**Theme 4: Health and Wellbeing**

**Theme 5: Employment and Enterprise**

**Theme 6: Accommodation**

**Theme 7: Education**

**Theme 8: Culture, Heritage and Identity**

**Theme 9: Participation, Empowerment, Cooperation and Accountability**

The presentation under each of the themes is structured as outlined below:

- **Strategic Outcome**
- **Strategic Objectives**
- **Outline of Key Issues**
- **Addressing the Key Issues**

## Theme 1: Combatting Racism and Discrimination

### Strategic Outcome

The right of Travellers and Roma in Ireland to live their lives free of racism and discrimination is realised. A positive culture of respect for, and protection of, the cultural identity of Travellers and Roma is fostered and facilitated in the delivery of all public services.

### Strategic Objectives for Combatting Racism and Discrimination

1. Through implementation of the National Action Plan Against Racism (NAPAR) and other initiatives, deliver a significant improvement to the mechanisms in place for combatting racism and discrimination faced by the Traveller and Roma communities.
2. Plan and deliver public services in a context of cultural competence, with due regard to Traveller and Roma cultural identity and taking account of the requirements of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty (the 'Public Sector Duty').
3. Strengthen knowledge of, and effective access to, the equality remedies that are available to the Traveller and Roma communities.
4. Address the extremely low levels of trust in, and satisfaction with, An Garda Síochána and the justice system generally on the part of Travellers and Roma, and the consequences that can flow from this in the absence of an alternative system of conflict resolution, including interfamily violence and feuding, both of which inflict very damaging consequences on the community.
5. Address the high levels of representation of Travellers in all levels of the penal system.

### Outline of Key Issues

The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)<sup>31</sup> defines racial discrimination as:

**'any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.'** (CERD, Article 1)

Racism manifests itself in a variety of ways, both subtle and overt. It can range from snubs and exclusion through to discrimination, the creation of barriers to inclusion that can emerge at all levels in public and private institutions, to acts of intimidation and violence.

31 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-convention-elimination-all-forms-racial>



According to the Council of Europe, there is a specific form of racism fuelled by prejudice and stereotypes that causes Roma and Travellers in Europe to be victim to various forms of discrimination,<sup>32</sup> including school segregation and forced sedentarisation, hate speech and, sometimes, hate crimes in many Council of Europe member states. These processes perpetuate the marginalisation of Traveller and Roma communities and pose serious obstacles for any policy initiatives to improve their situation.

A report on research published by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth in July 2023 found that attitudes towards Travellers and Roma were significantly less positive than they were towards other diversity groups. The UN Human Rights Committee has also highlighted its concerns in relation to the multiple forms of discrimination that the Traveller and Roma communities face, inter alia, in education, housing and employment, in interactions with law enforcement, including through racial profiling and unwarranted home searches, as well as the overrepresentation of Travellers in all parts of the penal system.

### **Addressing the Key Issues**

Renewed efforts will be made to combat racism and discrimination against Travellers and Roma through implementation of the NAPAR.

Public services will be delivered in a context of cultural competence, and staff will receive appropriate training to do so. A key focus will be placed on assessing compliance with the Public Sector Duty and research will be commissioned on the implementation of the Public Sector Duty, with reference to its overall impact, including for the Traveller and Roma communities.

Renewed efforts to address hate speech and hate crime will be emphasised while ensuring adequate implementation and enforcement processes are in place to deal with all forms of hate crime and hate speech experienced by Travellers and Roma.

## **The adequacy of existing supports for the provision of legal advice to Travellers and Roma will be reviewed to determine improvements required, including in relation to discrimination against claimants of the Housing Assistant Payment (HAP).**

To address interfamily violence and feuding in the Traveller community, which derives at least in part from the extremely low levels of Traveller trust in and satisfaction with An Garda Síochána, steps will be taken to support the further development of counselling and mediation services and capacities, including through a much enhanced role for local Traveller and Roma organisations.

Initiatives will also be undertaken to improve outcomes for Travellers and Roma in prisons, detention and the probation service.

32 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/roma-and-travellers/antigypsyism/-/discrimination>

## Theme 2: Children and Young People

### Strategic Outcome

Traveller and Roma children and young people live in a society in which they feel safe, their potential is supported, their voices are heard, and equality of opportunity is promoted.

### Strategic Objectives for Children and Young People

1. Traveller and Roma children and young people participate in the development of policy, legislation, research and services which impact on them.
2. Children and young people from the Traveller and Roma communities live in a safe and secure environment.
3. Traveller and Roma children and young people have the opportunity to participate in youth work programmes and access youth services that meet their needs.

### Outline of Key Issues

Traveller and Roma children and young people are often more vulnerable, have fewer opportunities and may have experienced difficult circumstances and challenges in their lives. *The lives of Children from Traveller and Roma Communities in Ireland* (DCEDIY Internal working paper, November 2020, unpublished) emphasises that Traveller and Roma children suffer the impacts of deprivation in their daily lives and that this affects their life chances. Childhood comes once and negative impacts at an early stage carry forward to the teenage years, and into adulthood. Everything must therefore be done to help children now, and their needs must be known and kept constantly in mind when policy is being developed and implemented. The voice of Traveller and Roma children and young people must be central in this.

The Children's Rights Alliance *Report Card 2024*, indicated that Traveller and Roma children face significant structural discrimination in Ireland, and that persistent discrimination against the Traveller community contributes to poorer outcomes in health, education and employment, and lower life expectancy. Similarly for the Roma community, persistent poverty and inadequate standards of living jeopardise their health and wellbeing, as well as access to education.<sup>33</sup>

In the NTRIS II, children and young people refer to the age group 0-24 years old. Census 2022 revealed that over 54% of the total Traveller population and 39% of the total Roma population are within the 0-24 age bracket. Children and young people represent 32% of the total overall population in Ireland.

33 <https://childrensrights.ie/reportcards/report-card-2024/>



## Addressing the Key Issues

The participation of Traveller and Roma children and young people, in both the development of policy and services which impact on them, and in youth programmes and services that meet their needs, is key to successful inclusion and building a sense of belonging in Irish society. The Tusla National Working Group for Traveller children and young people focusses on building Traveller and Roma children and young people trust and engagement with Tusla Services, and on promoting awareness, access, and participation in Tusla services for the Traveller community.

**A number of pilot projects aimed at ensuring Traveller and Roma children and young people live in a safe and secure environment are in train, and it is important that the initiatives achieving successful outcomes are put on a more sustainable footing.**

These initiatives include empowering Traveller and Roma families with access to parenting skills information, and supporting the development of a sustainable national home visiting service through Tusla, with a focus on programmes that have the ability to adapt their approach to ensure they are inclusive and that they engage positively with the Traveller community.

The implementation of the Supporting Travellers Advance through Universal Services (STATUS) Toolkit in all youth organisation services, along with the delivery and take up of cultural awareness training for all staff providing services to and engaging with Travellers and Roma children and young people will facilitate the participation of Traveller and Roma children and young people in services that meet their needs.

## Theme 3: Gender Equality

### Strategic Outcome

Traveller and Roma women and girls feel empowered and enjoy equal opportunities, rights and conditions in all spheres of life, both public and private.

### Strategic Objectives for Gender Equality

1. Foster the participation of Traveller and Roma women in political and public life, including decision-making, and in leadership positions.
2. Address and combat gender-based violence against Traveller and Roma women and girls.
3. Promote and support Traveller and Roma women's and girls' access to education, employment and accommodation (*actions embedded in other themes*).

### Outline of Key Issues

A large number of Traveller and Roma women and girls are subject to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination on the ground of gender, and they may also face prejudice related to their age, sexual orientation, gender identity, civil status, beliefs, ethnicity, ability or other personal characteristics.

In the preamble to the *Recommendation to member States on equality of Roma and Traveller women and girls* (Council of Europe, 2024), the Committee of Ministers emphasised that there are still structural obstacles preventing the realisation of Traveller and Roma women's full enjoyment of their human rights in society, and that Traveller and Roma women and girls suffer from stark inequalities in fields such as education, employment, housing, health, life expectancy and participation in public and political life. Traveller and Roma women and girls can also be subject to gender-based violence, and are often not aware of redress mechanisms that are in place to tackle discrimination.<sup>34</sup>

Achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls is central to building a fair, inclusive and prosperous society. Gender equality is a human right, which promotes sustainable development and wellbeing for all.

34 [CM/Rec\(2024\)1 \(coe.int\)](#)



## Addressing the Key Issues

The NTRIS II is one of the key strategies under the equality frameworks through which the Government will pursue actions to advance the rights of Traveller and Roma women and girls and to enable their full participation in Irish society. It is important to promote the empowerment of Traveller and Roma women and girls in all spheres, including political life, and to provide targeted supports to facilitate Traveller and Roma women's engagement in key areas including education, employment and economic development. Actions to address instances of multiple discrimination and focussing on greater equality for women and girls are embedded throughout the NTRIS II Action Plan.

The specific needs of Traveller and Roma women and girls will be considered when raising awareness around Domestic Sexual Gender Based Violence (DSGBV) within the Traveller and Roma communities, and greater access to DSGBV support services for Traveller and Roma women and girls will be facilitated. The needs of Traveller and Roma women experiencing violence will be addressed to enable them to access supports, including women's refuges.

**Traveller and Roma women's community engagement and political participation will be supported, and the participation of Traveller and Roma women at leadership levels will be promoted.**

## Theme 4: Health and Wellbeing

### Strategic Outcome

Travellers and Roma experience the highest attainable standard of health, mental health and wellbeing.

### Strategic Objectives for Health and Wellbeing

1. Address the social determinants of Traveller and Roma health through a comprehensive public health response that provides tailored and affirmative measures to promote health and reduce inequalities, and that effectively implements the National Traveller Health Action Plan.
2. Improve Traveller and Roma mental health and wellbeing, and combat mental health-related stigma. Improve awareness of mental health difficulties and improve access to services.

### Outline of Key Issues

While Ireland has made great strides to improve health and extend life expectancy, these improvements have not always benefited Travellers or Roma. They experience severe health inequalities, reflected in a shorter life and a poorer quality of health. The findings of the *All-Ireland Traveller Health Study* (AITHS, 2010) are stark.

## The overall Traveller mortality rate is 3.5 times higher than that of the general population.

Traveller men tend to die on average at least 15 years younger than their settled Irish male peers while Traveller women die approximately 11 years younger than their peers. The Traveller infant mortality rate is 3.5 times the rate of the general population. The suicide rate in the Traveller community is alarmingly high: 11% of all deaths are caused by suicide, almost seven times higher than the rate for the general population.

The 2018 National Roma Needs Assessment indicated that nearly half of Roma respondents did not have access to medical cards and GP care, and 24% of Roma women had not accessed healthcare during pregnancy. The research also revealed that

there is a high incidence of diabetes in the Roma community, and 1 in 2 Roma reported that their mental health had not been good for more than fourteen days out of the previous month.



Traveller and Roma health inequalities reflect the social and economic disadvantages faced by this population group, broadly referred to as the social determinants of health. Being a member of a minority ethnic group can be a predictor of poor health. A comprehensive public health response, which provides tailored and affirmative measures, delivered in partnership with Travellers and Roma, is needed to prevent diseases, promote health and prolong life for this population group.

The social determinants of Traveller and Roma health are being addressed in the 45 actions of the *National Traveller Health Action Plan 2022-2027* (NTHAP). The NTHAP focuses on a clear implementation strategy, in which the HSE is working in partnership with Traveller Health Units and the Primary Health Care for Travellers Projects (PHCTPs). It also involves close working with other public bodies providing services that impact on Traveller health and wellbeing, including community and local development, anti-discrimination measures, accommodation and homelessness, employment and income support, and education. There is a clear interlinkage, therefore, with the overarching high-level strategic focus of NTRIS II on the range of thematic areas affecting the lived experience of Travellers and Roma.

### **Addressing the Key Issues**

A 2-year funding programme will be developed under the Sláintecare Healthy Communities initiative, to improve the long-term health and wellbeing of Travellers. The PHCTPs are a key method of engaging and including minority ethnic groups in health service provision. The evaluation of the impact of the PHCTPs, in partnership with Travellers, will inform monitoring and need for future developments.

In line with the Women's Health Action Plan, a national model to support the health needs of Traveller women at risk of homelessness will be developed, and guidance will be issued on overcoming the various challenges of rolling out culturally appropriate supports across the health and accommodation systems.

The Roma community have unique health needs that need to be addressed, including health literacy, translation, medical card supports and pregnancy supports. A Roma Health Action Plan incorporating mental health actions will be developed to address Roma specific healthcare needs.

A National Traveller Mental Health Implementation Plan will be delivered and additional funding will be provided for Traveller mental health and suicide prevention measures, with a focus on children and young people. Travellers and Roma access to, and engagement with, mental health services will be improved. Traveller-specific suicide prevention training, co-produced with Travellers, will be developed, and a national surveillance system for deaths by probable suicide among Travellers will be developed and implemented.

## Theme 5: Employment and Enterprise

### Strategic Outcome

Travellers and Roma have equal access to quality and sustainable employment. Entrepreneurship and self-employment opportunities for Travellers and Roma are supported.

There is a positive and inclusive workplace culture where diversity is valued and every individual is treated with respect and dignity.

### Strategic Objectives for Employment and Enterprise

1. Adopt a strategic approach to addressing Traveller and Roma unemployment in the context of prevailing strong labour market conditions.
2. Increase the number of Travellers and Roma in employment in the public sector.
3. Increase the number of Travellers and Roma in employment in the private sector.
4. Support self-employment, entrepreneurship and social enterprise opportunities.
5. Address barriers to accessing the labour market and entrepreneurship opportunities, with specific reference to financial exclusion.
6. Build a positive and inclusive workplace culture (*actions embedded in other themes*).

### Outline of Key Issues

The Irish labour market is currently performing extremely well. Latest estimates indicate an unemployment rate of under 5 per cent, which is considered to be near full employment.<sup>35</sup> While the record numbers in employment are welcome, Travellers and Roma remain under-represented in the labour market. Census 2022 data indicates an unemployment rate of 61% for the Traveller community and an employment rate of 18%, which is substantially worse than the national rates, albeit significantly improved since Census 2016.

For the first time, Census 2022 separately identified Roma as an ethnicity. Based on the principal economic status question, an unemployment rate of 17% and an employment rate of 61% is indicated for members of the Roma community.

Existing research on the labour market experiences of the Traveller and Roma communities has identified a number of key barriers to employment including discrimination, both in hiring processes and within the workplace, low levels of education and literacy, and a lack of access to tailored public programmes and supports. In a 2019 survey conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in respect of Travellers and Roma across six European countries, 38% of Irish Travellers reported experiencing discrimination while job-seeking in the six months prior to being surveyed; this figure rose to 70% when the time period was extended to five years. These figures represented the largest percentage across all six countries for their respective timeframes.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Labour Force Survey Quarter 3 2023 (CSO)

<sup>36</sup> Roma and Travellers in Six Countries, FRA 2020.



A 2023 survey conducted into Irish attitudes towards diversity reported that 67% of respondents thought a Traveller could be at a potential disadvantage when applying for a job; 63%, in the case of an individual from the Roma community. These were among the groups considered most disadvantaged, along with people with a disability, reported at 65%.

It is crucial to ensure employment outcomes are not driven by unconscious bias or overt discrimination in recruitment practices, and that Travellers and Roma can pursue jobs, careers and business opportunities matched with their skills, experience, and aspirations, within an inclusive labour market.

The FRA report that among Roma and Travellers across Europe, 26% of men and 11% of women think it is hopeless to look for a job or think they will not be hired because of their Roma and Traveller background (FRA, 2020). The effects of this include poverty and financial exclusion. In all countries, 25% of Roma and Travellers do not have a bank account (FRA, 2020), which is a major barrier in being able to access the labour market.

### **Addressing the Key Issues**

The employment and enterprise theme reflects the Government commitment in the Programme for Government to develop a Traveller and Roma Training, Employment and Enterprise Plan.

Employment is one of the key social determinants of health, and *Pathways to Work 2021-2025* recognises that employment is vital to individual wellbeing, not just in the financial sense but in terms of social, physical, and mental health. Intreo Employment Services and Intreo Partners play a vital role in providing access to appropriate employment, education and training supports to assist under-represented and disadvantaged groups make the transition to the labour market. Delivering

on these commitments as well as implementing the NTRIS II Action Plans will address barriers to work faced by Travellers and Roma and improve their labour market outcomes.

The mapping of service provision and improving the availability of labour market statistics will inform future employment actions for Travellers and Roma, while the increase of targeted resources, supports and interventions will support Travellers and Roma in accessing employment.

Promoting the provision and uptake of internships, work placement, work experience and apprenticeship opportunities within the public and private sectors for Traveller and Roma communities, and taking steps to ensure real opportunities for employment on foot of these, will increase the number of Travellers and Roma in employment in the public and private sectors. The Traveller and Roma Internship initiative in the Civil Service will be enhanced and a wider Public Service Internship Programme for Travellers and Roma will be developed.

The Public Service can act as a leader in the effort to increase employment in the Traveller and Roma communities. Targeted and evidence-informed initiatives under the *Better Public Services* strategy will ensure that the Public Service reflects the diversity of Irish society and that Traveller and Roma communities can access meaningful and permanent employment.

Increased support will be provided to Traveller-led organisations for self-employment, entrepreneurship and social enterprise opportunities. The expansion of the Special Initiative for Travellers (SIT), which will include the appointment a SIT coordinator, will also contribute to improving Traveller and Roma access to employment. Addressing financial exclusion will help overcome a major barrier to accessing the labour force.

## Theme 6: Accommodation

### Strategic Outcome

Improve the quality and quantity of Traveller-specific accommodation and continue delivery under *Housing for All* with the overall objective that every citizen in the State should have access to good quality homes through a steady supply of housing in the right locations, with economic, social and environmental sustainability built into the system.

### Strategic Objectives for Accommodation

1. Adequate provision of Traveller-specific accommodation for Travellers and delivery of accommodation under *Housing for All*.
2. Address Traveller and Roma homelessness, and support access to accommodation services.

### Outline of Key Issues

The FRA survey conducted in 2019 found that 92% Irish Travellers felt that there were not enough places for them to live, especially Traveller-specific accommodation, and that 24% of Travellers faced severe housing deprivation. 73% of the FRA survey respondents indicated being discriminated against when trying to rent or buy houses in the last five years, and a survey on attitudes towards diversity and the equality grounds (IPSOS, 2023) found that only 53% of the wider community would feel comfortable having Travellers or Roma as neighbours.

The Annual Estimate of Traveller Families carried out by local authorities in 2022 indicates that there are 12,184 Traveller families in the State, of which 79% are housed in standard accommodation and 21% are accommodated in Traveller-specific accommodation.

## According to the 2018 Roma Needs Assessment, 46% of Roma reported being homeless at some stage in their lives.

Twenty-four percent (24%) of Roma reported living in overcrowded households of 8 or more people, and 66% said they could not afford to heat their home adequately.

Planning for, providing and managing culturally sensitive Traveller and Roma accommodation is both complex and challenging. Accommodation is one of the social determinants that influences health and is linked with a range of deprivation factors experienced by Travellers and Roma, such as poor education rates and outcomes, racism, mortality and discrimination.<sup>37</sup> By improving the condition of accommodation in which Travellers and Roma live, and by working to provide additional accommodation where it is needed, some of these issues can be addressed while contributing to improved outcomes more generally for the Traveller and Roma communities.

37 [https://www.paveepoint.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Pavee-Point-Traveller-and-Roma-Centre\\_ICESCR-Ireland-Traveller-and-Roma-2024-Final.pdf](https://www.paveepoint.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Pavee-Point-Traveller-and-Roma-Centre_ICESCR-Ireland-Traveller-and-Roma-2024-Final.pdf)



## Addressing the Key Issues

The Government will continue to make improvements to the provision of appropriate accommodation for Travellers and a dedicated budget will fund the delivery of a Traveller-specific accommodation programme, aimed at providing accommodation specifically for the Traveller community, and ensuring suitable accommodation options for Traveller families are available in local authority areas.

The Government approved the drafting of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2024 on 30 January 2024. The General Scheme provides for Amendments to the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 to provide legal and habitual residence as eligibility criteria in the Social Housing Assessment process.

The National Pilot Caravan Loan Scheme for Travellers has the potential to provide access to credit for families to buy a trailer. The Pilot Caravan Home Loan scheme provided by local authorities will be reviewed and the recommendations stemming from the evaluation will be addressed.

Housing for All has the overall objective that every citizen in the State should have access to good quality homes through a steady supply of housing in the right locations, with economic, social and environmental sustainability built into the system.

**Addressing homelessness is a priority for Government. Critical to supporting households to exit homelessness is increasing the supply of housing.**

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage is prioritising measures which focus on accelerating social and affordable housing supply through a combination of new build, targeted acquisitions and leasing. To better inform policy on reducing and preventing homelessness for Traveller and Roma families, enhanced reporting will be developed to have access to data in relation to the ethnicity of those in homeless emergency accommodation.

Initiatives will be undertaken to address experiences of homelessness and overcrowded accommodation affecting Traveller and Roma families, taking account of the additional educational needs of large Traveller and Roma families, which exceed the limits of existing local authority standard provision, and those of Traveller and Roma women moving away from violent domestic situations.

The National Quality Standards Framework for Homeless Services in Ireland sets out that homeless services provide clear, accessible information to service users, staff, and others. Specifically, it provides that information on service provision is available in accessible and easy-to-read format; information is made available in other languages, as required and that services users can access interpreters if required.

## Theme 7: Education

### Strategic Outcome

Ensure equity of access, opportunity and outcomes, as well as meaningful participation, across the continuum of education for all Travellers and Roma, including those with additional educational needs, in an inclusive system where they feel respected and supported to fulfil their potential, and where they, and their cultures and ethnic identities, are visible and valued.

### Strategic Objectives for Education

1. Through implementation of the Traveller and Roma Education Strategy, Equal Start and other initiatives: meet the specific learning needs of Traveller and Roma children and young people more effectively; improve retention, progression and outcomes in education; and continue to build and strengthen the relationship between the education system and Traveller and Roma families and communities.
2. Combat and prevent racism and discrimination against Travellers and Roma within schools and the education system generally, and ensure there is a welcoming environment with a positive culture of respect for and protection of Traveller and Roma cultural identities.
3. Work to improve the supports, services and information provision available for Traveller and Roma students interested in accessing Higher Education, Further Education and Training and Apprenticeships, address the obstacles that exist, and increase participation rates.

### Outline of Key Issues

Travellers face poorer educational outcomes than the general population, with lower participation, retention and completion rates at all levels. For 15.1% of Travellers, the highest level of education completed is upper secondary education, compared with 27.5% of the general population. A total of 4.7% of Travellers completed third level education compared to 47.7% of the general population. 6 in 10 male Travellers had no formal education or were educated to primary level at most.

## The evidence highlights that Traveller children and teenagers experience discrimination within the school environment, which may precipitate early school leaving.

The Fundamental Rights Agency (2020) reported that 27% of parents or guardians said their children were bullied in school because they were a Traveller. Pupils lack motivation to continue in mainstream education as it is not associated with positive outcomes because of the high level of discrimination faced when seeking employment.

For the Roma community, the research report *Roma in Ireland – A National Needs Assessment* (2018) indicated that the majority of adult respondents' experiences in education were from education systems outside of Ireland, with an average duration of school attendance of 5 years. Only 11.1% of respondents reported completing 12 or more years



of education. In addition, 39% of Roma adults in households reported that they had never been to school, with a much higher percentage reported for women compared with men (41% compared with 22%). Roma face the added complication of language: 71% of respondents in the 2018 Roma Needs Assessment had difficulty in reading English.

This Strategy places a key focus on the importance of education as a central building block in the lives of Traveller and Roma children and young people, and their families, and outlines outcomes and objectives across the education system. The overall aim is to support Travellers and Roma in meeting their educational needs and to address barriers preventing them from achieving their full potential.

### **Addressing the Key Issues**

Much of the fundamental improvement required in education will come through the development and implementation of the Traveller and Roma Education Strategy (TRES) as well as the Equal Start model to achieve equity of access and opportunity to participate for very young Traveller and Roma children in early learning and care provision.

It is expected that the TRES will incorporate targeted measures to incremental progress towards the norm in access, retention and progression, and in educational outcomes, as between the Traveller and Roma communities and the wider population.

**The TRES will address the full continuum of education, from early years, through primary and secondary school, and into further and higher education.**

Over the lifetime of NTRIS II, and subsequently, there will be an incremental increases in the number of Traveller pupils completing the Junior Cycle examination and the Leaving Certificate examination, to reflect the completion rates in the general population.

In Early Learning and Care, phased implementation of the Equal Start model will commence with the aim of increasing participation rates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme for Traveller and Roma children with an eventual target of reaching the participation rate of the general population.

Proposals for targeted support systems for Travellers and Roma in schools, ELC settings and Higher and Further Education Institutions will be considered and implemented, which prioritise the role of parents/guardians, families and communities in supporting the education journey.

A range of measures will be implemented to support inclusion and diversity, such as updating the school intercultural guidelines, embedding Traveller history and culture in the curriculum, and training for new and existing educators and leaders in education.

In higher education, steps will be taken to build community-based partnerships with the Traveller and Roma communities to help break down barriers to educational progression beyond the Leaving Certificate examination. This will include the valuable role that apprenticeship plays as a means of bridging the gap between education and employment.

## Theme 8: Culture, Heritage and Identity

### Strategic Outcome

An Ireland in which:

- Traveller and Roma culture, heritage and identities are valued and respected, in furtherance of the State recognition of Travellers as a distinct ethnic group and in compliance with Ireland's international commitments towards both Travellers and Roma;
- Travellers and Roma are supported to preserve and promote their cultural heritage, thereby facilitating inter-generational learning, cultural continuity and positive self-identity;
- the Traveller and Roma contribution to contemporary arts and culture is supported and valued; and,
- through learning about 'the other', and through recognition of mutual interdependence within the diversity of today's Irish society, there is much improved inter-community understanding between the Traveller and Roma communities and the wider population.

### Strategic Objectives for Culture, Heritage and Identity

1. Ensure ongoing, sustainable and visible support for, and promotion of, Traveller and Roma culture, heritage and traditions, with a key focus on intergenerational initiatives, cultural continuity and combatting stereotyping and misinformation about Travellers and Roma in the wider community.
2. To assist the active participation of the Traveller and Roma communities in cultural, artistic, and sporting activity.

### Outline of Key Issues

The Traveller and Roma cultures are rich and vibrant and should be nurtured and supported through Government policies. It is important that work to advance projects that increase the visibility of Traveller and Roma culture and heritage continue.

**Funding to support events is instrumental in empowering national, regional and local organisations to celebrate Traveller and Roma culture and diversity and to ensure that they are valued within Irish society.**

Travellers report a lack of understanding about, and visibility of, Traveller culture and heritage. There is stereotyping of, and negative views about, the community, which leads to negative and inaccurate opinions about Traveller culture among the wider population. Younger Travellers lack the opportunity to explore what Traveller culture and ethnic identity means to them and how they might wish to live out their culture and identity.

Roma, too, testify to the effects in wider society of stereotyping and negative views about their community. Some feel compelled to hide their ethnic identity in all aspects of their interaction with the wider population, to avoid negative treatment. This difficult situation is compounded by problems with the



English language, given that 71% of Roma adults have difficulty understanding English forms and 56% require interpreting in order to be able to communicate effectively.

The recent Survey on People in Ireland's attitude towards diversity (DCEDIY, July 2023) reported that only 53% of the settled community is comfortable living next door to someone from the Traveller or Roma communities. This is a difficult baseline against which to propose a strengthening of initiatives to safeguard and to celebrate Traveller and Roma culture, history and identity. Nonetheless, such initiatives, apart from their positive impact within the two communities, can only serve to break down barriers of antipathy or prejudice that for many individuals is built upon a lack of knowledge, a fear of 'the other', and a failure to recognise mutual interdependence within the diversity of today's Irish society.

### **Addressing the Key Issues**

In furtherance of the State recognition of Travellers as a distinct ethnic group and in compliance with Ireland's international commitments to safeguard Traveller and Roma heritage and culture, this Strategy commits to a series of objectives to ensure that Traveller and Roma culture, heritage and identity are valued and respected in Irish society;

**that Travellers and Roma are supported to preserve and promote their cultural heritage; and that inter-generational learning, cultural continuity and positive self-identity for Travellers and Roma are facilitated.**

These objectives aim to promote how the positive cultural elements of the Traveller and Roma communities can have an impact on many other areas of Traveller and Roma life and on the relationships between these communities and the wider population.

National Traveller and Roma organisations will be invited to propose initiatives to promote positive representations of, and respect for, Travellers and Roma, and to recognise the equal status that the Traveller and Roma communities hold today within the diversity of Irish society. The Government will provide resources for the advancement of a number of those initiatives.

Research will be conducted to establish the wider population's level of knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Traveller and Roma culture and heritage. This will inform the adoption of future actions under the Strategy.

There will be an improvement in access and funding for artists, designers and craftspeople from the Traveller and Roma communities, promoting positive self-identity, cultural continuity, contribution to contemporary arts and culture as well as the preservation of knowledge of traditional Traveller and Roma crafts and skills.

Steps will be taken to address the negative stereotyping of Travellers and Roma in the media, including social media.

New actions will be taken under NTRIS II to increase the numbers of Traveller and Roma participating in sporting activities, while research will be commissioned on the barriers that exist to such participation.

## Theme 9: Participation, Empowerment, Cooperation and Accountability

### Strategic Outcome

Promote participation by Travellers and Roma within electoral processes and through local community, regional and national structures. Strengthen the ability of both communities to influence the development of policy and the delivery of local services and to monitor the progress and impact of initiatives that address the issues that are relevant to them, including under this Strategy.

### Strategic Objectives for Participation, Empowerment, Cooperation and Accountability

1. Ensure that Travellers are adequately represented at local level through structures that are appropriately supported and resourced, and can have their voice heard in the delivery of local services.
2. With specific focus on areas where significant Roma populations exist, support the development of a network of dedicated Roma-led organisations with competence to represent, and advocate on behalf of, local Roma communities.
3. Ensure that Travellers and Roma are adequately represented on the overseeing structures for the NTRIS II, providing them with the opportunity to monitor and interrogate processes of implementation of the strategy and related action plans and to seek modifications in delivery as they consider appropriate.
4. Deliver enhanced accountability and rigour in monitoring the implementation of NTRIS II, primarily through greater transparency in the reporting of progress, and ensure an adequate response to intersectional discrimination and inequality, reflecting the diversity that exists within the Traveller and Roma communities.
5. Increase the engagement of Travellers and Roma in the democratic process and their participation in national and local administration, particularly in the fields of equality and inclusion, research, etc.
6. Review systems of data collection and available research across all state-funded organisations, processes and systems relevant to the Traveller and Roma communities: (i) to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty (where it applies); (ii) to support the monitoring and evaluation of actions under NTRIS II and of services delivered to the Traveller and Roma communities; and for any gaps identified, propose ways to improve the quality of data collected, the variety of disaggregated data published, or new research, consistent with the upcoming National Equality Data Strategy.



## Outline of Key Issues

The development of NTRIS II, particularly in the local consultation process, has made clear that Travellers and Roma want to be involved in the development of policies that affect them.

## **Travellers and Roma want to have a voice in the way in which local services are delivered, to ensure that those services are sensitive to the cultural preferences of both communities and are geared to the reality of their lives and the obstacles they face.**

However, there are barriers to effective participation. Based on 2017 data, 43% of Travellers surveyed had a broadband connection compared with 80% of the general public, and just 50% of Travellers aged 24-35 said they had voted in the last general election. Furthermore, digital constraints due to the lack of necessary equipment, skills and supports, serve to limit access to services and education.

Poverty is also strongly associated with financial exclusion, and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights found in its 2019 survey that 63% of Irish Travellers did not have a bank account, compared to just 6% of people in Ireland generally.

Similar issues confront the Roma community. Language is an added complication: 7 out of every 10 Roma persons have difficulty in understanding English forms while 6 require interpreting to be able to communicate effectively. To this must be added the fact that the voice and involvement of the Roma community in policy development is very underdeveloped. With a few exceptions, at the local level in particular, there is limited civil society infrastructure that enables the raising of issues of concern for Roma.

## Addressing the Key Issues

This Strategy aims to encourage meaningful Traveller and Roma participation at all stages of policy-making at local, national and EU levels, and to promote political, economic and cultural participation of members of the Traveller and Roma communities and a sense of belonging as full members of society. Additionally, it aims to promote empowerment and capacity building of Travellers and Roma, civil society, as well as their involvement in public authorities, and build cooperation and trust between stakeholders and between Travellers and Roma and the general population.

As regards the Traveller community, there will be an audit of local representative structures with the aim of identifying gaps in local structures, by local authority area, and making recommendations in relation to same. Depending on the outcome of the audit, additional supports will be provided, as appropriate, through an efficient and effective funding model. Consideration will be given to the role of the Traveller Interagency Groups (TIGs) and to determine whether the TIGs are a model that should be given renewed focus or whether other more recent structures (e.g. Public Participation Networks, Local Development Companies, Local Community Development Committees) could fulfil a similar role.

As regards the Roma community, there will be a specific focus on areas where significant Roma populations exist with the aim of supporting the development of a network of dedicated Roma-led organisations with competence to represent, and advocate on behalf of, local Roma communities.

The 2020 Programme for Government called for the successor strategy to the NTRIS to have a stronger outcomes-focused approach. In this regard, a concerted drive has been made to incorporate against each action in the NTRIS II Action Plan explicit targets and timelines as Key Performance Indicators against which to measure progress.

In addition, stronger Traveller and Roma representation is provided for in the processes underpinning Steering Committee oversight of implementation of this Strategy.

**Greater accountability for the delivery of change will be achieved through publication of an annual report on implementation of the NTRIS II for presentation to the Minister and relevant Government and Oireachtas Committees.**

Furthermore, a new National Traveller and Roma Forum is proposed that will have a mandate to interrogate processes of implementation of the strategy and related action plans and to seek modifications in delivery as appropriate.

Finally, a review will be conducted of systems of data collection and available research across all state-funded organisations, processes and systems relevant to the Traveller and Roma communities in order to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty (where it applies) and to underpin the monitoring and evaluation of actions under NTRIS II and of services delivered to the Traveller and Roma communities. For any gaps identified, there will be improvements in the quality of data collected, the variety of disaggregated data published, consistent with the upcoming National Equality Data Strategy, and new research will be conducted to underpin actions under the second NTRIS II Action Plan, 2027–28. Implementing a National Traveller Health Action Plan.



# *Paruimos* Change



# Appendices



# Appendix 1

## Programme for Government (2020) commitments relevant to Travellers and Roma

- Undertaking an independent assessment of the pilot projects aimed at retaining Traveller and Roma children in education.
- Ensuring that the housing needs of the Traveller Community are met by local authorities and ensuring that existing funding is fully drawn down and utilised.
- Providing additional supports for students who are homeless, resident in family hubs, or in direct provision. Further developing access programmes to Higher and Further Education for students from disadvantaged groups, including members of the Traveller Community, those in direct provision, and those who are socio-economically disadvantaged.
- Tasking the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) to develop an Irish Cultural Studies Junior Cycle level 2 short course, which values the heritage, language, nature, biodiversity, and culture (including Traveller culture and history) of Ireland and history of the Irish Language in the global landscape.
- Continuing with, and expanding, the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education and developing a National Traveller Education Strategy, including a plan to improve access to Higher Education for members of the Traveller Community.
- Publish a Traveller and Roma Mental Health Action Plan.
- Develop a Traveller and Roma Training, Employment and Enterprise Plan.
- Ensure in-reach supports and pathways to access to treatment for homeless, Traveller and new communities.

## Appendix 2

### European Commission's *EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation for 2020–2030*

The European Commission's *EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation for 2020–2030* ('EU Roma Strategic Framework')<sup>38</sup> was communicated to Member States in October 2020.

This 10-year plan builds upon the previous EU Framework for National Roma Integration strategies up to 2020 ('EU Framework up to 2020') and places the focus on promoting socio-economic inclusion in the fields of education, employment, housing and health, as well as on equality and participation.

Another target in the 10-year plan is for Member States to increase the effectiveness of their national measures to improve outcomes for Travellers and Roma, and to use indicators and measurable targets to evaluate and monitor the efficacy of measures pursued. The EU Strategic Framework is based on insights gained from the evaluation of the EU Framework up to 2020. This evaluation, conducted by the Commission, and the conclusions drawn from it by the Council, the European Parliament and several European and national civil society organisations, revealed that measures previously pursued had not yet achieved the desired targets of putting an end to the discrimination and marginalisation of Traveller and Roma people. The need to renew and strengthen the commitment to achieving Traveller and Roma equality was highlighted.

The European Parliament's accompanying resolution of 17 September, 2021, called on Member States to step up efforts to integrate Sinti and Roma and to combat negative attitudes to people with a Romani background.

The aim in placing increased focus on tackling discrimination is to reinforce, but not to replace, the approach to integration adopted under the EU Framework up to 2020. This is to assist Member States in setting individual priorities within their national implementation processes taking account of their specific context.

The Irish Government fully endorses the EU Roma Strategic Framework, which highlights both horizontal cross cutting issues and key sectoral issues to be addressed.

Member States are called to adopt national Traveller and Roma strategies and to communicate them to the European Commission.

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38 [https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/99cc0720-68c2-4300-854f-592bf21dceaf\\_en?filename=eu\\_roma\\_strategic\\_framework\\_for\\_equality\\_inclusion\\_and\\_participation\\_for\\_2020\\_-\\_2030.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/99cc0720-68c2-4300-854f-592bf21dceaf_en?filename=eu_roma_strategic_framework_for_equality_inclusion_and_participation_for_2020_-_2030.pdf)



# Appendix 3

## List of relevant human rights instruments

1. United Nations' International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ('ICCPR');
2. United Nations' International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights ('ICESCR');
3. United Nations' International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination ('CERD');
4. United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child ('CRC');
5. United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women ('CEDAW');
6. United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ('CRPD');
7. UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions;
8. Council of Europe's European Convention on Human Rights ('ECHR');
9. Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities ('FCNM')

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